

A decorative blue floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the central text.

GUZ 60 1Peter

*Bible Commentary:
David Guzik TEV - LX*

David Guzik

David Guziks' Commentary On
60 1Peter
Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)

Greeting

1Pe 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, of Galatia, of Cappadocia, of Asia, and of Bithynia,

1Pe 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit to obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Born Again to a Living Hope

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He according to His great mercy having regenerated us to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1Pe 1:4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and unfading, having been kept in Heaven for you

1Pe 1:5 by the power of God, having been guarded through faith to a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time;

1Pe 1:6 in which you exult; yet a little while , if need be, grieving in manifold trials,

1Pe 1:7 so that the proving of your faith, much more precious than perishing gold, but having been proved through fire, may be found to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1Pe 1:8 whom having not seen, you love; in whom not yet seeing, but believing, you exult with unspeakable and having been glorified,

1Pe 1:9 obtaining the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1Pe 1:10 About which salvation the prophets sought out and searched out, prophesying concerning the grace for you,

1Pe 1:11 searching for what, or what sort of time the Spirit of Christ made clear within them; testifying beforehand of the sufferings belonging to Christ, and the glories after these.

1Pe 1:12 To whom it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us they ministered the same things, which now were announced to you by those having preached the gospel to you in the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven; into which things angels long to bow to look.

Called to Be Holy

1Pe 1:13 Because of this, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, perfectly hope on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

1Pe 1:14 as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves to your former lusts in your ignorance,

1Pe 1:15 but according to the Holy One who has called you, you also become holy in all conduct;

1Pe 1:16 because it has been written, "Be holy," "because I am holy." Lev. 19:2

1Pe 1:17 And if you call on the Father, the One judging according to the work of each one without respect to persons, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,

1Pe 1:18 knowing that not with corruptible things, silver or gold, you were redeemed from your worthless way of life handed down from your fathers,

1Pe 1:19 but with precious blood of Christ, as of an unblemished and unspotted lamb,

1Pe 1:20 indeed having been foreknown before the foundation of the world, but revealed in the last times because of you,

1Pe 1:21 the ones believing in God through Him, He raising Him from the dead, and giving glory to Him so that your faith and hope may be in God.

1Pe 1:22 Having purified your souls in the obedience of the truth through the Spirit to unpretended brotherly love, love one another fervently out of a pure heart,

1Pe 1:23 having been born again, not by corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the living word of God, and remaining forever.

1Pe 1:24 Because "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of men as the flower of grass; the grass was dried, and its flower fell out,

1Pe 1:25 but the Word of the Lord remains forever." And this is the Word announced as gospel to you. Isa. 40:6 -8

1 Peter 1:1-25

1 Peter 1 - Living Like You are Born Again

A. A greeting from the Apostle Peter.

1. (1) The writer and the intended readers of this letter.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

a. **Peter:** He was not merely **an apostle**, but there is a sense in which he was the *leader* of the apostolic group. Peter was an important and influential man in the early church. Considering the author, the first Christians would receive this letter with a sense of importance.

i. Peter's name is mentioned in the gospels more than anyone except the name of Jesus. No one speaks in the gospels as often as Peter did, and Jesus spoke more to Peter than to any other individual.

- Jesus rebuked Peter more than any other disciple.
- Peter was the only disciple who dared to rebuke Jesus.
- Peter confessed Jesus more boldly and accurately than any other disciple.
- Peter denied Jesus more forcefully and publicly than any other disciple.
- Jesus praised Peter more than any other disciple.
- Jesus addressed Peter as Satan alone among the disciples.

ii. Since Peter is so prominent in the gospel records, it is worthwhile to remind ourselves of some of the important mentions of Peter in the record of Biblical history.

- When Jesus woke up early in the morning to pray before the sun came up, Simon Peter led the other disciples on a hunt to find Jesus and tell Him what He should do (Mar 1:35-39).
- Peter put his nets out at the direction of Jesus to bring in a massive catch of fish (Luk 5:1-11).
- Peter went on a unique outreach trip with the other disciples (Mat 10:1-42).
- Peter stepped out of the boat during a raging storm and walked on the water with Jesus (Mat 14:24-33).
- Peter was the one who said, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also, we have come to believe and to know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Joh 6:68-69).
- Peter saw Jesus transfigured in glory, together with Moses and Elijah (Mat 17:1-9).

- Peter was the one who asked Jesus how many times we should forgive a brother that sins against us, quoting the high number of “seven times” (Mat 18:21-35).
- Peter was the one who asked Jesus, after the encounter with the rich young ruler, what the disciples would receive for giving everything up to follow Jesus (Mat 19:27-30).
- Peter was the one who insisted that Jesus would not wash his feet; then he commanded Jesus to wash his whole body! (Joh 13:16-20).
- Peter heard Jesus predict that he would deny Him three times (Mat 26:30-35), and Peter replied, “*Even if I have to die with you I will not deny You!*” (Mat 26:35), and the rest of the disciples agreed.
- Peter was the one who cut off the *right* ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus (Joh 18:1-11).
- Peter denied Jesus three times, cursing and swearing that he did not even know “the Man,” refusing to even name the name of Jesus (Mat 26:69-75).
- Peter was the one who ran with John the disciple to the tomb on the morning of the resurrection, after hearing the report of the women that the body of Jesus was not in its tomb (Joh 20:1-10).
- Peter was the one who received a personal visit from the resurrected Jesus on the day of the resurrection (Luk 24:34).
- Peter received a public restoration of Jesus in front of the other disciples after the resurrection of Jesus (John 21).

iii. Significantly, Peter introduced himself as an **apostle**. "The supreme importance of the apostles is suggested by the fact that the phrase *of Jesus Christ* is attached to no other New Testament office: we do not read of *teachers of Jesus Christ* or *prophets of Jesus Christ* or *evangelists of Jesus Christ*, only of *apostles of Jesus Christ*." (Grudem)

iv. Peter did nothing to explain or justify his apostleship and did not add a phrase like "by the will of God" as Paul did on some occasions (1Co 1:1, 2Co 1:1, Gal 1:1, Eph 1:1, and so on). "Unlike Paul, Peter's apostolic status was never questioned. This brief phrase indicates Peter's authority." (Hiebert)

b. **To the pilgrims:** The idea behind the word **pilgrims** is of someone who lives as *a temporary resident in a foreign land*. **Pilgrims** are sojourners and travelers, and **pilgrims** live in constant awareness of their true home.

i. The early Christian writing *The Epistle to Diognetus* gives the idea of what **pilgrims** are. "They inhabit the lands of their birth, but as temporary residents of it; they take their share of all responsibilities as citizens, and endure all disabilities as aliens. Every foreign land is their native land, and every native land a foreign land... they pass their days upon earth, but their citizenship is in heaven." (Cited in Barclay)

c. **To the pilgrims of the Dispersion:** Peter clearly wrote to Gentiles, Christians (see 1Pe 1:18; 1Pe 2:10; 1Pe 4:3). Yet he called them **pilgrims of the Dispersion**, a name that was applied to the Jews. He called them this because he saw the Christians of his day as sprinkled throughout the world as the Jewish people were in **the Dispersion** after the fall of Jerusalem when the Babylonians conquered Judah.

d. **Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia:** These specific areas were places Christianity had extended in the first several decades after the beginning of the church. It was probably the route that the original courier of Peter's letter followed in distributing the letter. This was not written to any one congregation, but intentionally written to *all* Christians.

2. (2) *Peter's description of his readers and all Christians.*

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

a. **Elect according to the foreknowledge:** Peter first described his intended readers as **elect**. This means simply that they are *chosen*, chosen by God in a particular and unique sense.

i. "The opening characterization of the readers as elect was meant to strengthen and encourage them in their affliction. The doctrine of election is a 'family truth' intended to foster the welfare of believers." (Hiebert)

b. **According to the foreknowledge of God:** This describes the nature of their election. God's choosing is not random or uninformed, but **according** to His **foreknowledge**, which is an aspect of His omniscience. This **foreknowledge** *includes* prior knowledge of our response to the gospel, but is not *solely dependent* on it.

i. Though God's election is **according to... foreknowledge**, there is more to His foreknowledge than His prior knowledge of my response to Jesus. Election is not election at all if it is only a cause-and-effect arrangement basing God's choice only on man's.

c. **In sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience:** An essential result of election is **sanctification** and **obedience**. While some would like to think that election has only to do with going to heaven or hell, Peter reminds us that it also touches earth. A claim to be among the **elect** is doubtful if there is no evidence of **sanctification** and **obedience**.

d. **And sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:** However, since all the elect fall short of perfect sanctification and obedience, there is cleansing from sin provided for them through the **sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ**.

i. There were three circumstances in the Old Testament where blood was sprinkled on people.

- At the establishment of Sinai or Old Covenant (Exo 24:5-8).
- At the ordination of Aaron and his sons (Exo 29:21).
- At the purification ceremony for a cleansed leper (Lev 14:6-7).

ii. The **sprinkling of the blood of Jesus** on us accomplishes the same things. First, a covenant is formed, then we are ordained as priests to Him, and finally we are cleansed from our corruption and sin. Each of these is ours through the work of Jesus on the cross.

e. **God the Father... the Spirit... Jesus Christ:** Peter's effortless way of combining the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in our salvation displays the New Testament approach to the Trinity. It is not detailed as a specific doctrine, but woven into the fabric of the New Testament.

i. Jesus has a **Father**, but not in the sense of being higher than He or the One who gave Him existence. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have existed together throughout eternity and each is equally God. **Father** and *Son* are terms used to describe the *relationship* between these first two members of the Trinity.

f. **Grace to you and peace be multiplied**: Peter brought a greeting that had become common among the Christians, combining elements from Greek culture (**Grace**) and Jewish culture (**peace**).

B. What it means to be saved and to live saved.

1. (3-5) *Thanks to the Father for His work of salvation.*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

a. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**: When Peter considered the salvation of God, his immediate response was to simply praise Him. This is especially because the motive for God's work is found in Him, not in us (being **according to His abundant mercy**).

i. Hiebert says of the extended passage 1Pe 1:3-12 : "This beautiful passage is the outpouring of an adorning heart. Only one who has devoutly contemplated the greatness of our salvation could utter such a magnificent paean of praise, one that

prepares and encourages the suffering soul to steadfastly continue the spiritual battle.”

ii. All His goodness to us begins with **mercy**. “No other attribute could have helped us had mercy been refused. As we are by nature, justice condemns us, holiness frowns upon us, power crushes us, truth confirms the threatening of the law, and wrath fulfils it. It is from the mercy of our God that all our hopes begin.” (Spurgeon)

b. **Has begotten us again:** The wording of **begotten us again** is different from *born again* (Joh 3:3) but the meaning is the same. Peter’s idea is that when a person is saved, they are made a *new creation* (as in 2Co 5:17).

c. **To a living hope:** We are born again to **a living hope** because we have eternal life in a Savior who has conquered death Himself. The hope lives because it is set upon an **inheritance incorruptible** that can never **fade away** because it is **reserved in heaven**. This is a significant contrast to any inheritance on this earth.

i. “It is also called a ‘living hope,’ because it is imperishable. Other hopes fade like withering flowers. The hopes of the rich, the boasts of the proud, all these will die out as a candle when it flickers in the socket. The hope of the greatest monarch has been crushed before our eyes; he set up the standard of victory too soon, and has seen it trailed in the mire. There is no unwaning hope beneath the changeful moon: the only imperishable hope is that which climbs above the stars, and fixes itself upon the throne of God and the person of Jesus Christ.” (Spurgeon)

d. **Incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away:** Peter didn’t really describe our inheritance. All he can tell us is what it is *not*. What our inheritance

actually *is* is something too great for him to describe. Yet we can know that our inheritance can't *perish*, it can't *spoil*, and it can't **fade away**.

i. Our inheritance is like the inheritance of Aaron (Num 18:20) and the inheritance of the Psalmist (Psa 16:5-6), which is the gift of God Himself. Since God gives Himself to us now, our inheritance begins here and now.

ii. We cannot experience this inheritance unless we are born again. Unregenerate man does not have the *capacity* to enjoy this inheritance. It would be like rewarding a blind man by showing him the most beautiful sunset or taking him to an art museum.

iii. In speaking with those who don't know Jesus we shouldn't just tell them of the agonies of hell they will experience, but also of the glories of heaven they will miss.

e. Who are kept by the power of God through faith:

The promise of our inheritance is certain because we **are kept by the power of God**. This enables us to endure **through faith** until the coming of Jesus.

i. "God's power is the garrison in which we find our security." (Hiebert) We are **kept by the power of God**, but it is **through faith**, meaning our faith. The person who is **kept** is a person abiding in a continuing relationship of **faith** with God. We could say that **faith** activates the preserving power of God in the life of the Christian.

ii. "To have been told, as in the preceding verse, that our inheritance was *reserved in heaven* could have yielded us little comfort, unless that assurance had been followed and capped by this, that the heirs also are being kept for its full enjoyment." (Meyer)

2. (6-9) *The purpose of trials for those who are saved.*

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

a. **In this you greatly rejoice:** We especially **rejoice** in God's keeping power when we are **grieved by various trials**, knowing that He will keep us as our faith is **tested by fire**.

i. **If need be, you have been grieved:** Sometimes it is thought that a strong Christian will never be **grieved** in a trial. The idea is that a Christian should be like Superman; though bullets are shot at Superman, they all bounce off of his chest. Yet Peter here tells us that there is a "**need be**" not only for the **various trials**, but more especially that there is a "**need be**" for being **grieved** itself. God has a purpose not only for the trial but also for the heavy grief we feel in the trial.

ii. **Various trials:** "Literally, it means 'many-colored' and was used to describe 'the skin of a leopard, the different-colored veinings of marble, or an embroidered robe.'" (Hiebert)

b. **Faith... tested by fire:** Our **faith** isn't tested because God doesn't know how much or what kind of faith we have. It is **tested** because we often are ignorant of how much or what kind of faith we have. God's purpose in testing is to display the enduring quality of our faith.

i. "Indeed, it is the honor of faith to be tried. Shall any man say, 'I have faith, but I have never had to believe under difficulties'? Who knows whether thou hast any faith? Shall a man say, 'I have great faith in God, but I have never had to use it in anything more than the ordinary affairs of life, where I could probably have done without it as well as with it'? Is this to the honor and praise of thy faith? Dost thou think that such a faith as this will bring any great glory to God, or bring to thee any great reward? If so, thou art mightily mistaken." (Spurgeon)

ii. **Much more precious than gold that perishes:** If **gold** is fit to be tested and purified by fire, then how **much more** our faith, which is far **more precious than gold**? God has a great and important purpose in testing our faith.

- Faith is tested to show that it is sincere faith or true faith.
- Faith is tested to show the strength of faith.
- Faith is tested to purify it, to burn away the dross from the gold.

iii. **Gold** is one of the most durable of all materials. Yet it too will one day perish, but our faith will not.

c. **Receiving the end of your faith:** The **end of your faith** is the return of Jesus and the ultimate **salvation of your souls**. Testing and trials are inevitable as long as we are on this side of **the end of your faith**. As long as we do not see the God we serve we must endure through trials and face them with faith and joy.

i. **Whom having not seen you love:** Peter knew that though he had seen Jesus (both before and after the resurrection) most every Christian in the early church had **not seen** Jesus. Nevertheless, they loved

Him. Jesus was no less real because they had not seen Him.

ii. "In short, there is an equality between the believers in the present time, and those who lived in the time of the incarnation; for Christ, to a believing soul, is the same *to-day* that he was *yesterday* and will be *for ever*." (Clarke)

iii. The word translated "**joy inexpressible**" "occurs only here in the New Testament, and describes a joy so profound as to be beyond the power of words to express." (Grudem) "Their joy was no ordinary, earth-born joy." (Hiebert)

3. (10-12) The prior revelation of the salvation experienced by Christians.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

a. **Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully:** It was important to Peter – and to all the New Testament writers – to demonstrate that their teaching was no novelty, but that it was **testified beforehand** by the prophets. Understanding this made salvation so much greater in the mind of Peter's afflicted readers.

i. "Peter did not seek to prove the truth of his teaching about salvation by showing its agreements with the prophets; rather, he sought to encourage his afflicted readers by demonstrating the importance and comprehensive grandeur of the salvation for which they were being afflicted." (Hiebert)

b. Prophesied of the grace that would come to you:

The prophets of the Old Testament longed to see the **grace** of the New Covenant to come. Prophesying by the **Spirit of Christ**, they knew *something* of His **sufferings** and **glories**, but far less than they longed to know.

i. One may only imagine how excited Isaiah would have been to read the Gospel of John. The Old Testament prophets knew so much; yet much was hidden to them, including the character of the Church (Eph 3:4-6) and the very essence of life and immortality (2Ti 1:10).

c. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering: The prophets understood that **they were ministering** to people beyond them as well as to people in their own day. These things the prophets predicted were reported as fact by the apostles (**the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel**).

i. Because we know the *Who* (Jesus) and the *when* (Jesus' day) of these Old Testament prophecies, they should be of far more interest to us than they were even in the day of the prophets.

d. Things which angels desire to look into: The unfolding of God's eternal plan is something that **angels desire to look into**. Angels observe our conduct (1Co 4:9), making it necessary that Christians conduct themselves properly (1Co 11:10).

i. Part of God's eternal purpose is to show His wisdom to the angelic beings through His work with the church (Eph 3:10-11). God *wants* the angels to **look** in on what He does in the church, and the idea is that the angels are bending over with intense interest and **desire** to learn.

ii. Therefore, they **desire** to see and learn. This word "Denotes a strong interest or craving. The present tense portrays a present, continued inner yearning to comprehend. The term does not imply that the desire cannot or should not be fulfilled, but it does mark an enduring angelic effort to comprehend more of the mystery of human salvation." (Hiebert)

iii. "The longing must therefore include a holy curiosity to watch and delight in the glories of Christ's kingdom as they find ever fuller realization in their lives of individual Christians throughout the history of the church." (Grudem)

iv. "1Co 4:9, Eph 3:10, and 1Ti 3:16 likewise picture the supernatural world eagerly observing God's program of human redemption. The concept seems grounded in Jesus' words in Luk 15:7; Luk 15:10 where angels are said to rejoice over one repentant sinner." (Hiebert)

4. (13-17) The conduct of those who are saved.

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work,

conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

a. **Therefore gird up the loins of your mind:** Living the way God wants us to means that we must **gird up the loins** of our **mind**. The idea in this phrase is to prepare for action, much like the phrase “rolling up your sleeves.” Then we must also be **sober**, which means the ability to take a serious look at life.

i. To **gird up the loins of your mind** is to get rid of loose and sloppy thinking; to bring the rational and reflective powers of your mind under control. It means to control what you think about, those things you decide to set your mind upon.

ii. **Be sober:** “It denotes a condition free from every form of mental and spiritual loss of self-control; it is an attitude of self-discipline that avoids the extremes.” (Hiebert)

b. **Rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ:** Peter has told us a lot about God’s grace. He greeted us with grace (1Pe 1:2). He told us of the grace that came to us in Jesus, predicted by the prophets of old (1Pe 1:10). Now he goes further, writing of **the grace that is to be brought to you** when Jesus comes back. The only way we will be able to stand before Jesus on that day is because of the *unmerited favor* He gives and will give to us.

i. **Grace** isn’t just for the past, when we first gave our lives to Jesus. It isn’t only for the present, where we live each moment standing in His grace (Rom 5:2). It is also for the future, when **grace** will be **brought to us**. God has only just *begun* to show us the riches of His grace.

ii. “*Grace* is the unmerited love of God, stooping to save and bless; the source of all those bright and holy gifts which come from his infinite heart.” (Meyer)

c. **As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance:** Fulfilling God’s call to holiness requires that we, **as obedient children**, break off with the lifestyle of the world (which is characterized by **lusts** and **ignorance**).

d. **But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy”:** The main idea behind *holiness* is not moral purity but it is the idea of “*apartness*.” The idea is that God is *separate*, different from His creation, both in His essential nature and in the perfection of His attributes. But instead of building a wall around His apartness, God calls us to come to Him and share His apartness. He says to us, **“Be holy, for I am holy.”**

i. When we fail to see God’s apartness, we begin to believe that He is just a “super-man.” Then we don’t see that His love is a **holy** love, His justice is a **holy** justice, and so on with all of His attributes. Holiness is not so much something we possess as it is something that possesses us.

ii. In this, the God of the Bible is radically different from the pagan gods commonly worshipped in New Testament times. “Heathenism scarcely produced a god whose example was not the most abominable; their greatest gods, especially, were paragons of impurity.” (Clarke)

e. **And if you call on the Father:** If we as Christians **call on** a holy God (presumably for help), we must understand that we call on a God who shows no **partiality** - and will so judge our conduct. This makes a working, sober, holy walk all the more important.

5. (18-21) *The motivation for godly living.*

Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

a. **Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things:** The high call for godly living makes sense in light of the price that was paid for our redemption. The precious blood of Jesus did not save us so that we could then live as if we were garbage.

b. **From your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers:** Peter described the frame of mind which seeks to be justified by law as **aimless conduct**. It seems to have an *aim* – gaining merit before God by works – but it is in fact **aimless** because it cannot succeed.

c. **A lamb without blemish and without spot:** Peter here spoke in reference to the completely sinless character of Jesus. If He were not **without blemish and without spot**, He would not have been qualified to be our Redeemer.

d. **He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world:** The work of Jesus was not a plan developed late in the course of redemption. It **was foreordained before the foundation of the world**, though it was made evident **in these last times**.

e. **For you who through Him believe in God:** The entire plan of redemption is for those who **believe in God**, though even their belief is **through Him**. Those who **believe in God** are not disappointed because their faith and hope has been substantiated by Jesus' resurrection **from the dead**.

6. (22-25) *The necessity for love among the saved.*

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because

**"All flesh *is* as grass,
And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.
The grass withers,
And its flower falls away,
But the word of the LORD endures forever."**

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

a. **Love one another fervently:** Holy living is incomplete if it is not accompanied by **love**. To be a Christian means to have a **sincere love of the brethren**, but we are encouraged to exercise that love **fervently**.

b. **Love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again:** Such love is only possible (and only to be expected) of those who have been **born again** by the eternal word of God.

i. Again, Peter did not use the same wording for **born again** as is found in John 3; but he did use the exact same idea.

c. **Through the word of God which lives and abides forever:** We are **born again... through the word of God**. But it doesn't only give us new life. It also tells us to **love one another**. If the word of God is as Isa 40:8 says it is - **the word of the Lord which endures forever**, then we are both obligated by it and empowered by it, to live out the kind of love and holiness Peter speaks of.

d. **The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever:** Peter here quoted from Isa 40:6-8. **The word of the LORD** certainly *has* endured. It has survived centuries of manual transcription, of persecution, of ever changing philosophies, of all kinds of critics, of neglect both in the pulpit and in the pew, of doubt and disbelief - and still, **the word of the LORD endures forever!**

i. In AD 303 the Roman Emperor Diocletian demanded that every copy of the Scriptures in the Roman Empire be burned. He failed, and 25 years later the Roman Emperor Constantine commissioned a scholar named Eusebius to prepare 50 copies of the Bible at government expense.

ii. "A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put." (Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences*)

iii. "God's Word never dies, God's Word never changes. There are some who think we ought to get a new gospel every few years or even every few weeks, but that was not Peter's notion. He wrote, and he was divinely inspired to write, concerning 'the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.'" (Spurgeon)

iv. Since this eternal, always potentially fruit-bearing seed is in us, we have both the *obligation* and the *ability* to have a **sincere love of the brethren**. Perhaps we could say that if we need more love towards others it begins with having more of the **incorruptible seed** set in our hearts and allowed to grow.

e. **Through the word of God... Now this is the word:** Some people try to draw a sharp distinction between the two Greek words most often translated **word**, which are the ancient Greek words *rhema* and *logos*. But here Peter used both words (*logos* in 1Pe 1:23 and *rhema* in 1Pe 1:25) to refer to the exact same idea. The two words sometimes have subtle differences, but often not significant differences.

A Living Stone and a Holy People

1Pe 2:1 Then having laid aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil words,

1Pe 2:2 as newborn babes desire the pure soul-nourishing milk, that you may grow by it;

1Pe 2:3 if indeed you "tasted" "that the Lord is good;" LXX-Psa. 33:9; MT-Psa. 34:8

1Pe 2:4 to whom having drawn near, a living Stone, indeed having been rejected by men, but chosen by God, precious;

1Pe 2:5 you also as living stones are being built a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1Pe 2:6 Because of this, it is also contained in the Scripture: "Behold," I lay in Zion" an elect, "precious Stone," "a Corner-foundation;" "and the one believing in Him shall never in any way be ashamed." Isa. 28:16

1Pe 2:7 Then to you who believe belongs the preciousness. But to disobeying ones, He is the "Stone which those

building rejected; this One became the Head-of-the-corner,"
Psa. 118:22

1Pe 2:8 and a Stone-of-stumbling, and a Rock-of-offense" to those disobeying, stumbling at the word, to which they were also appointed. Isa. 8:14

1Pe 2:9 But you are "an elect race," "a royal priesthood," "a holy nation," "a people for possession," so that "you may openly speak of the virtues" of the One who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; LXX-Ex. 23:22; MT-Ex. 19:5, 6

1Pe 2:10 you who then were "not a people, but now are the people" of God; "the one not pitied then but now pitied." Hos. 1:6, 9 2:1, 23

1Pe 2:11 Beloved, I exhort you as temporary residents and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul;

1Pe 2:12 having your behavior good among the nations, in that which they speak against you as evildoers; by observing your good works, they may glorify God in a day of visitation.

Submission to Authority

1Pe 2:13 Then be in obedience to every ordinance of men because of the Lord; whether to a king, as being supreme;

1Pe 2:14 or to governors, as through Him having indeed been sent for vengeance on evildoers, but praise on well doers,

1Pe 2:15 because so is the will of God, doing good to silence the ignorance of foolish men;

1Pe 2:16 as free, and not having freedom as a cover of evil, but as slaves of God;

1Pe 2:17 honor all, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

1Pe 2:18 Servants, be obedient to your masters in all fear, not only to those good and forbearing, but also to the perverse ones .

1Pe 2:19 For this is a grace, if because of conscience toward God anyone bears grief, suffering unjustly.

1Pe 2:20 For what glory is it if you patiently endure while sinning and being buffeted? But if you are suffering while doing good, and patiently endure, this is a grace from God.

1Pe 2:21 For you were called to this, for even Christ suffered on our behalf, leaving behind an example for us, that you should follow His steps;

1Pe 2:22 "who did not sin, nor was guile found in His mouth;" Isa. 53:9

1Pe 2:23 who, having been reviled, did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten, but gave Himself up to Him who was judging righteously;

1Pe 2:24 who "Himself bore in His body our sins" onto the tree; that dying to sins, we might live to righteousness; of whom, "by His wound, you were healed.

1Pe 2:25 For you were straying sheep," Isa. 53:4 -6 but now you are turned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1 Peter 2:1-25

1 Peter 2 - The Glory and the Duty of God's People

A. Coming to Jesus through His word.

1. (1-3) How to respond to the eternal word of God.

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

a. **Therefore:** Peter has just demonstrated the glory and eternal character of God's word. Now **therefore**, in light of what God's word is to us, we should receive the word and receive it with a particular heart.

b. **As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word:** The word **desire** is strong. In the Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) it is used for man's deepest longing for God: *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God (Psa 42:1)*. It speaks of the **desire** each believer should have for the word of God.

i. **Babes... desire:** A healthy new baby has an instinctive yearning for its mother's milk. When things are right, you don't have to tell it to want the milk.

ii. The failure to either **desire** or to *receive* this **pure milk of the word** is the reason for so many problems in both individual Christian lives and in congregations. "The sickly condition of so many Christians sets forth a lamentable complaint of the food with which they are supplied. To say nothing of strong meat, they do not even get milk. Hence the Church of God too much resembles the wards of a children's hospital." (Meyer)

c. **That you may grow thereby:** The Word of God is necessary for the growth of the Christian. We should all **desire the pure milk of the word**, even though Paul rebukes the Corinthians for being able to *only* receive milk (1Co 3:1-2), the Christian should *never* get tired of the simple truths of the Gospel simply presented.

i. Who are the **newborn babes**? In a sense, we all are. "The most advanced among us, in knowledge and attainment, are, in comparison with what they shall be, only as babes." (Meyer)

ii. "To drink the milk of the Word is to 'taste' again and again what he is like, for in the hearing of the Lord's words believers experience the joy of personal fellowship with the Lord himself." (Grudem)

d. **Laying aside all malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking:** This described the attitude of heart that receives the word and grows by the word. This is a humble, honest heart, willing to *do* what the Word of God says.

i. **Evil speaking:** This ancient Greek word has more the idea of spicy and hurtful gossip than the idea of profane speech.

e. **If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious:** If we have received from God and have **tasted** (personally experienced) **that the Lord is gracious**, then we have great reason and responsibility to receive the word in the enthusiastic way that babies receive their milk.

2. (4-5) *Coming to Jesus.*

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

a. **Coming to Him as to a living stone:** Peter's picture here is that God is building a spiritual temple (**a spiritual house**) using **living stones** (Christians), those who have come to the ultimate **living stone** (Jesus).

i. This **spiritual house** shows that as much as Israel had a temple, Christians also have one. Yet the Christian's temple is **spiritual**, and they themselves are the temple.

ii. Jesus is first called the **living stone**; then we are called **living stones**. We live because we are connected with Him who is the source of life. "It is in union with him that they live, and answer the end of their regeneration; as stones of a building are of no use but as they occupy their proper places in a building, and rest on the foundation." (Clarke)

b. **Chosen by God and precious**: As much as God chose Israel, so the church is also **chosen**. As much as Israel had a priesthood, so Christians are a **holy priesthood**. And as much as Israel had sacrifices, so Christians **offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God**.

i. **A holy priesthood**: The believer is his own priest before God. He does not need any mediator except his great High Priest, Jesus. "There can no longer be an elite priesthood with claims of special access to God, or special privileges in worship or in fellowship with God." (Grudem)

ii. Peter's idea isn't that God has abandoned Israel or that they have no place in His redemptive plan, but that Christianity is in no way inferior to Judaism.

c. **To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**: God does the work of building (**being built**), but we do the job of offering sacrifices pleasing to Him, as we come to Jesus as who we are - **living stones**, made by Him.

i. Even a living stone cannot build something great for God as it sits all on its own. What God does in us *together* is important. He is building something out of us *together*.

ii. We can only serve as priests as we do it **through Jesus Christ**. In ourselves, we have no priestly

authority, but only in Jesus.

3. (6-8) *The glory of the Chief Cornerstone.*

Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

“Behold, I lay in Zion

A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,

And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient,

**“The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone,”**

And

**“A stone of stumbling
And a rock of offense.”**

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

a. **Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone:** If we are being built into a *spiritual house*, there is no doubt who our **Chief Cornerstone** is. Even though men **rejected** Jesus, He has become the **Chief Cornerstone** in the work of building the church.

i. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of Psalms 118, the stumbling stone of Isaiah 8, the foundation stone of Isaiah 28, the supernatural stone of Daniel 2, and the rock that miraculously gave Israel water in the wilderness (1Co 10:4).

b. **Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious:** Though this **chief cornerstone** is rejected by the **disobedient** and unbelieving, undeniably **He is precious** to those who **believe**. One way to know if a

person has truly Biblical faith is to see if Jesus is truly **precious** to them.

i. When Charles Spurgeon was 16 years old, he preached his first sermon in a village cottage to a handful of poor people, and he chose for his text 1Pe 2:7 : "*Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.*" Spurgeon said that he didn't think he could have preached on any other Bible passage, "but Christ was precious to my soul and I was in the flush of my youthful love, and I could not be silent when a precious Jesus was the subject." (Spurgeon)

ii. "Is Jesus precious to your soul? Remember, on your answer to this question depends your condition. You believe, if he is precious to you, but if he is not precious, then you are not believers, and you are condemned already because you believe not on the Son of God." (Spurgeon)

- Christ is precious *intrinsically*.
- Christ is precious *positively*.
- Christ is precious *comparatively*.
- Christ is precious *superlatively*.
- Christ is precious *suitably* to the need of the believer.

iii. This is true; though G. Campbell Morgan preferred the Revised Version translation: *For you therefore which believe is the preciousness*. "The declaration is not that believers know the preciousness of Christ; it is rather that they share it... The qualities of Christ that create His preciousness, His honour, are placed at the disposal of the believer."

iv. "*The honour is to you who believe; i.e.* the honour of being in this building, and of having your souls

saved through the blood of the Lamb, and becoming sons and daughters of God Almighty.” (Clarke)

c. **The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone:** Those who reject the Chief Cornerstone and refuse to build on Him instead **stumble** over Him. Instead of being their salvation, Jesus becomes to them **a rock of offense**.

i. Jesus quoted this passage from Psalms 118 in regard to Himself (Mat 21:42). A **chief cornerstone** is the starting point of a building; everything is laid out according to its connection to the **chief cornerstone**. Because it stands at the *corner*, the same stone is the starting place for two walls.

ii. Thus Jesus set out the course for both Jew and Gentile to be joined together into one glorious house for God. This in itself was **a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense** for the Jews, who thought that Gentiles should not have equal share with the Jews into God’s great house.

iii. In the thinking of many Jews of that time, God should not have built a new building with both Jew and Gentile. He should have simply renovated the present structure of Judaism (adding Jesus as the Messiah) and invited Gentiles to come into that structure. But God did something different, and it was **a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense** for many first-century Jews.

iv. Therefore these great titles of 1Pe 2:9-10 now apply to *all* believers, Jew and Gentile alike; whereas before they only applied to the Jewish people as God’s covenant people.

d. **They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed:** It is **appointed**

that those who are **disobedient to the word** should stumble over Jesus.

i. When Jesus spoke of Himself as the **stone** of Psalms 118, He spoke of what those who rejected Him are **appointed** to: *"And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."* (Mat 21:44)

4. (9-10) *The privileged place of God's people.*

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

a. **But you are a chosen generation:** The things that once exclusively belonged to Israel - their election (**chosen**), **priesthood**, and calling are now no longer the property of Israel alone. These are now the property of every Christian, and we have them in a greater and spiritual sense.

i. We are **a royal priesthood**. The offices of *royalty* and **priesthood** were jealously separated in Israel. But Jesus, who is our King and Priest, has brought them together for His people.

b. **His own special people:** We are **special** because we belong to God. A museum may be filled with quite ordinary things: hats, canes, shoes, and so forth; but they may be significant because they once belonged to someone famous. God takes ordinary people; and because He works in them, they are **special**.

i. These same titles were applied to Israel (Exo 19:5-6, Deu 4:20, Deu 7:6, and Isa 43:20-21). Now in Jesus we belong to God as **His own special people**.

ii. "The description of the Church is systematic and exhaustive. It is a race, and this suggests its life principle. It is a priesthood, and so has right of access to God. It is a nation, and so is under His government. It is a possession, and so is actually indwelt by Him." (Morgan)

c. **Who once were not a people but are now the people of God:** We once were without these privileges, and were not even **a people** before God. We had not seen the mercy of God, but **now have obtained mercy**.

i. In our culture, with its Christian foundations, we don't easily understand the great sense of privilege and relief that came to Gentiles as they were shared in the New Covenant with the God of Israel. Peter's message is wonderful: "You didn't used to belong, but now you belong to God and among God's people."

d. **That you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light:** The purpose for these high privileges is not so we can grow proud, but so that we can **proclaim the praises of Him** who has done such great things for us.

i. Since it is true that believers have a new life principle (**chosen generation**), a new access to God (**royal priesthood**), a new government (**holy nation**), and a new owner (**His own special people**), it will affect the way the believer lives life. That effect is described in the following verses.

B. How those who have come to Jesus are to live.

1. (11-12) When we come to Jesus, we are to abstain from fleshly lusts.

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

a. **Abstain from fleshly lusts:** We can only **abstain from fleshly lusts** as we live **as sojourners and pilgrims**, as those who recognize that this world is not their home, and that they have a home and a citizenship in heaven.

b. **Which war against the soul:** Peter understands that these **fleshly lusts... war against the soul**. To be a Christian means to fight against the lusts of the flesh, and the battle continues as long as we live in this flesh.

i. It is easy to see how the pursuit of fleshly lusts can destroy our physical body. Just ask the alcoholic dying of liver disease, or ask the sexually immoral person with AIDS or one of the 350,000 people on this earth who contracted a sexually transmitted disease in the last 24 hours. But Peter reminds us that fleshly lusts also **war against the soul**. Some escape disease in the physical body when they sin, but the disease and death of the inner man is a penalty that no one given over to the flesh escapes.

c. **Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles:** This kind of godly living makes our conduct **honorable among** those who don't know God yet. Though we can expect that they will **speak against you as evildoers**, they can still be brought to **glorify God** by seeing our godly conduct.

i. Christians were falsely accused of great crimes in the early church. Pagans said that at communion Christians ate the flesh and drank the blood of a baby in a cannibalistic ritual. They said that Christian "agape feasts" were wild orgies. They said that

Christians were antisocial because they did not participate in society's immoral entertainment. They said that Christians were atheists because they did not worship idols.

ii. But over time, it was clear that Christians were not immoral people - and it was shown by their lives. "The striking fact of history is that by their lives the Christians actually did defeat the slanders of the heathen. In the early part of the third century Celsus made the most famous and the most systematic attack of all upon the Christians in which he accused them of ignorance and foolishness and superstition and all kinds of things - *but never of immorality.*" (Barclay)

d. **The day of visitation:** This is probably a reference to their ultimate meeting with God, either when they go to meet Him or when He comes to meet them. The idea is that **the Gentiles** might be persuaded to become Christians by seeing the lives of other Christians, and that they would **glorify God** when they meet Him instead of cowering before His holy judgment.

i. "That the *day of visitation* means a time in which punishment should be inflicted, is plain from Isa 10:3 : *And what will ye do in the DAY of VISITATION, and in the desolation which shall come from afar? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory?*" (Clarke)

2. (13-17) *When we come to Jesus, we are to show proper submission to the government.*

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. For this is the will of

God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

a. Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man: As Christians we should be good citizens, submitting to government. This was very different from those zealous Jews in Peter's day who recognized no king but God and paid taxes to no one except God.

i. Peter wrote this in the days of the Roman Empire, which was not a democracy and no special friend to Christians. Yet he still recognized the legitimate authority of the Roman government.

ii. "The meaning of St. Peter appears to be this: the Jews thought it unlawful to obey any ruler that was not of *their own stock*; the apostle tells them that they should obey their civil magistrate, let him be of what stock he may, whether Jew or Gentile, and let him exercise the government in whatsoever *form*." (Clarke)

b. For the Lord's sake: This is why we obey the government. Since governments have a rightful authority from God, we are bound to obey them - unless, of course, they order us to do something in contradiction to God's law. Then, we are commanded to obey God before man (Act 4:19).

i. "God, as their supreme governor, shows them that it is his will that they should act uprightly and obediently at all times, and thus confound the ignorance of foolish men, who were ready enough to assert that their religion made them bad subjects." (Clarke)

c. **As to those who are sent by him:** Peter also insisted that *rulers* are **sent by him**; that is, **sent by God**. Governments are sent by God for the **punishment of evildoers** and for the recognition of those who do good.

i. God uses governing authorities as a check upon man's sinful desires and tendencies. Governments are a useful tool in resisting the effects of man's fallen nature. Based also on what Paul wrote in Romans 13, we can say that the greatest offense government can make is to fail to punish evildoers, or to reward evildoers through corruption.

d. **That by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:** Peter knew that our conduct is a way to defend the gospel. He knew that those who never read the Bible will read our lives, so it is by **doing good** that we **put to silence the ignorance of foolish men**.

e. **Yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God:** We are warned against taking the **liberty** we have in Jesus as an excuse for sin. Instead we use our **liberty** in Jesus to show the kind of love and respect that Peter calls for.

3. (18-20) *When we come to Jesus, we are to show proper submission to our employers.*

Servants, be submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God.

a. **Servants, be submissive to your masters:** The command to submit to masters isn't just to those who work for masters that are **good and gentle**, but also to those who are **harsh**. If we must endure hardship because of our Christian standards, it is then **commendable** before God.

b. **For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently?** To be punished for our wrongs is no **credit** to us. But when we are punished for doing good and endure it **patiently**, we are complimented **before God**.

i. "It appears from this that the poor Christians, and especially those who had been converted to Christianity in a state of slavery, were often grievously abused; they were *buffeted* because they were Christians, and because they would not join with their masters in idolatrous worship." (Clarke)

ii. "Our case is like that of a criminal who had better bear quietly a sentence for a crime he has not committed, lest by too much outcry he induce investigation into a list of offenses, which are not charged against him, because they are not known." (Meyer)

4. (21-25) The example of Jesus.

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

**"Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth";**

who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we,

having died to sins, might live for righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

a. **Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example:** Jesus is our **example** as someone who endured punishment unjustly. When **He was reviled** Jesus **did not revile in return**, but in His sufferings He **committed Himself** to the Father.

i. "He suffered, but not on account of any evil he had either *done* or *said*. In *deed* and *word* he was immaculate, and yet he was exposed to suffering; expect the same, and when it comes bear it in the same spirit." (Clarke)

ii. "Which hour do you think of the sufferings of the Lord, from Gethsemane to Golgotha, would be most deeply engraved upon the memory of Peter? Surely it would be that space of time in which he was mocked and buffeted in the hall of the high priest, when Peter sat and warmed his hands at the fire, when he saw his Lord abused, and was afraid to own that he was his disciple, and by-and-by became so terrified that, with profane language, he declared 'I know not the man.' So long as life lingered, the apostle would remember the meek and quiet bearing of his suffering Lord." (Spurgeon)

b. **Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree:** The suffering of Jesus is clearly an example for us; but it is far more than an example. He also **bore our sins** as sin-bearing substitute, and provided for our healing (**by whose stripes you were healed**).

i. Peter clearly meant the cross of Jesus when he mentioned the **tree** (literally *wood*). Jesus **bore our sins in His own body on the wood** - the wood of

the cross. Peter stated it here both to constantly remind Christians of the great work of Jesus on the cross, *and* to show them that even as the suffering of Jesus accomplished much, so their own suffering can be used of God.

c. **That we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness:** Peter reminds us that when Jesus died on the cross, we *also* **died to sins**. Our life is permanently changed by our identification with Jesus on the cross, even as the Apostle Paul described in Romans 6.

i. We have **died to sins** in the sense that our debt of sin and guilt was paid by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. When we **died to sins** with Jesus on the cross, it means that He paid our debts. We do not trouble ourselves over debts that are paid. "He who bore my sins in his own body on the tree, took all my debts and paid them for me, and now I am dead to those debts; they have no power over me. I am dead to my sins; Christ suffered instead of me. I have nothing to do with them. They are gone as much as if they had never been committed." (Spurgeon)

ii. We have **died to sins** in the sense that now a greater passion fills our life - a passion for the Lord Jesus Christ that is greater than our previous passion for sin. A miser may be dead to many pleasures and allurements of this world; but he is *alive* to the love of money. So we should be dead to sin but alive to Jesus.

d. **By whose stripes you were healed:** Peter quotes Isa 53:5, which primarily refers to spiritual healing but also includes physical healing. The provision for our healing (both physically and spiritually) is made by the sufferings (**stripes**) of Jesus. The physical aspect of our

healing is received in part now, but only completely with our resurrection.

i. In context we see that Peter's main point is that if a master treats us unjustly, we should not fear whatever harm he causes. We can be healed and restored by Jesus' suffering for us.

e. **For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls:** If not for Jesus' patient endurance under the persecution of the ungodly, we would still be **going astray**. But because of His work for us, we have **returned** to the **Shepherd** (pastor) and the **Overseer** (bishop) of our souls.

Wives and Husbands

1Pe 3:1 Likewise, wives, submitting yourselves to your own husbands, that even if any disobey the word, through the behavior of the wives, without a word they will be won,

1Pe 3:2 observing your pure behavior in fear.

1Pe 3:3 Of whom let it not be the outward act of braiding of hairs, and of putting gold around, or of clothing of adorning garments,

1Pe 3:4 but the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible adornment of the meek and quiet spirit, which is of great value before God.

1Pe 3:5 For so once indeed the holy women who were hoping on God adorned themselves, submitting themselves to their own husbands,

1Pe 3:6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose children you became, doing good, and fearing no terror. Gen. 18:12

1Pe 3:7 Likewise, husbands, dwelling together according to knowledge, as with a weaker vessel, the female, bestowing

honor, as truly being co-heirs of the grace of life, not cutting off your prayers.

Suffering for Righteousness' Sake

1Pe 3:8 And, finally, be all of one mind, sympathetic, loving the brothers, tenderhearted, friendly,

1Pe 3:9 not giving back evil for evil, or reviling against reviling; but, on the contrary, give blessing; knowing that you were called to this in order that you might inherit blessing.

1Pe 3:10 "For the one desiring to love life, and to see good days, let him restrain his tongue from evil, even his lips not to speak guile.

1Pe 3:11 Let him turn aside from evil, and let him do good. Let him seek peace, and pursue it;

1Pe 3:12 because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against any doing evil things." LXX-Psa. 33:13-17; MT-Psa. 34:12-16

1Pe 3:13 And who is the one harming you if you become imitators of the good?

1Pe 3:14 But if you truly suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you . "But do not fear their fear, nor be troubled.

1Pe 3:15 But sanctify" Isa. 8:12, 13 the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give an answer to everyone asking you a reason concerning the hope in you, with meekness and fear,

1Pe 3:16 having a good conscience, that while they speak against you as evildoers, they may be shamed, those falsely accusing your good behavior in Christ.

1Pe 3:17 For it is better, if the will of God wills it , to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

1Pe 3:18 Because even Christ once suffered concerning sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; indeed being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit;

1Pe 3:19 in which also, going in to the spirits in prison, He then proclaimed

1Pe 3:20 to disobeying ones, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, an ark having been prepared in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

1Pe 3:21 Which figure now also saves us, baptism (not a putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ;

1Pe 3:22 who going into Heaven is at the right of God, the angels, and authorities, and powers being subjected to Him).

1 Peter 3:1-22

1 Peter 3 - Submission and Suffering

A. Submission in the home.

1. (1-2) The heart of a godly wife.

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied by fear.*

a. **Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands:** The godly wife will **be submissive** to her husband. This submission isn't a reward for the husband's good behavior; as the proper order of the home, God commands it.

i. The teaching about submission was especially relevant to a first century married woman who had begun to follow Jesus. She would ask questions such as "Should I leave my husband?" or "Should I change my behavior towards him?" or "Should I assume a superior position to him because now I am in Jesus?"

ii. In the culture of the ancient world it was almost unthinkable for a wife to adopt a different religion than her husband. Christian women who came to Jesus before their husbands needed instruction.

b. **Likewise:** Proper submission in the home follows the same principles of submission as towards government or our employers. It is submission not only of the actions, but also of the heart - as demonstrated by the surrendering heart of Jesus (1Pe 2:21-25).

i. The call for submission is not merely a call for love and considerate action. It is a call to take the place of submission to authority. The ancient Greek word translated *submission* was used outside the New Testament to describe the submission and obedience of soldiers in an army to those of superior rank. It literally means, "to order under."

ii. Yet submission to authority can be totally consistent with *equality* in importance, dignity, and honor. Jesus was subject to both His parents and to God the Father but was not lower than either of them. "Thus the command to wives to be subject to their husbands should never be taken to imply inferior personhood or spirituality, or lesser importance." (Grudem)

iii. Of course, submission in marriage follows the same principles as submission in other spheres. We submit to God appointed authority as our obligation before God, unless that authority directs us to sin. In that

case it is right to obey God rather than men (Act 4:19-20).

c. **Be submissive to your own husbands:** Peter carefully observed that wives are called to submit to their **own husbands** and not to all men in a general sense. Male headship is God's commanded principle for the home and the church, not for society in general.

i. The principle of submission is presented in many different ways in the New Testament.

- Jesus submitted to His parents (Luk 2:51).
- Demons submitted to the disciples (Luk 10:17).
- Citizens should submit to government authority (Rom 13:1; Rom 13:5, Tit 3:1, 1Pe 2:13).
- The universe will submit to Jesus (1Co 15:27 and Eph 1:22).
- Unseen spiritual beings submit to Jesus (1Pe 3:22).
- Christians should submit to their church leaders (1Co 16:15-16 and 1Pe 5:5).
- Wives should submit to husbands (Col 3:18, Tit 2:5, 1Pe 3:5, and Eph 5:22-24).
- The church should submit to Jesus (Eph 5:24).
- Servants should submit to masters (Tit 2:9, 1Pe 2:18).
- Christians should submit to God (Heb 12:9, Jas 4:7).

ii. None of these relations are reversed. For example, masters are never told to submit to servants, Jesus is never told to submit to the church, and so forth. So while there must be a servant-like love and attitude on the part of those in positions of authority, that

does not eliminate the concept of God's order of authority and the corresponding submission.

d. That even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives: The benefit of submission is shown in the way that it affects husbands for God. A wife's submission is a powerful expression of her trust in God. This kind of faith and obedience can accomplish great things, even **without a word**.

i. Wives may want to shape their husbands, either guiding them to Jesus or guiding them in Jesus through their *words*. Peter reminds them that God's plan is that wives impact their husbands not through persuasive lectures, but through godly submission, **chaste conduct**, and the **fear** of God.

ii. There is a sense in which a wife's efforts to shape her husband through her own words and efforts may hinder the power of God's working on the husband. It is much more effective to submit in the way God says to, thus demonstrating trust in Him, and to let *God* have his way with the husband.

iii. "The attractiveness of a wife's submissive behaviour even to an unbelieving husband suggests that God has inscribed the rightness and beauty of role distinctions to include male leadership or headship in the family and female acceptance of and responsiveness to that leadership... The unbelieving husband sees this behaviour and deep within perceives the beauty of it. Within his heart there is a witness that this is right, this is how God intended men and women to relate as husband as wife. He concludes, therefore, that the gospel which his wife believes must be true as well." (Grudem)

e. **Do not obey the word:** This refers to an unbelieving husband, but it is a stronger idea than merely “do not believe.” It has the idea of someone in active disobedience to God’s word. Even *these* husbands can be won through the godly conduct of loving wives.

2. (3-4) *The true beauty of a godly woman.*

Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward; arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel—rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

a. **Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward:** Peter did not forbid all **adornment**. But for the godly woman **outward** adornment is always in moderation, and her emphasis is always on *inward* adornment.

i. **Arranging the hair:** According to William Barclay, in the world Peter lived women often arranged and dyed their hair. They also wore wigs, especially blonde wigs made with hair imported from Germany. Peter had this in mind speaking of the **adornment** that is ***merely outward***. Peter did not forbid a woman fixing her hair, or wearing jewelry, any more than he forbade her wearing **apparel** (*fine* is not in the original).

b. **Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart:** Real beauty comes from the **hidden person of the heart**. It isn’t something you wear or primp before a mirror to have. It is something you *are*.

i. The real question is “What do you depend on to make yourself beautiful?” Peter’s point is not that any of these are forbidden, but that they should not be a woman’s **adornment**, the source of her true beauty.

c. **The incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit:** The inner beauty of a godly woman is **incorruptible**. This means that it does not decay or get worse with age. Instead, **incorruptible beauty** only gets better with age, and is therefore of much greater value than the beauty that comes from the hair, jewelry, or clothing.

d. **A gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God:** Peter described the character of true beauty - **a gentle and quiet spirit**. These character traits are not promoted for women by our culture; yet they are **very precious in the sight of God**.

3. (5-6) Examples of submission.

For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

a. **In former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves:** Peter reminds women that he did not call them to a new standard; but to something that was practiced by **holy women of former times**.

b. **Who trusted in God:** When women submit to their husbands and when they do not put trust in their outward adornment, they are like the holy women of former times who **trusted in God**. They powerfully demonstrate their faith.

i. A woman can trust her own ability to influence and control her husband, or she can trust God and *be submissive*. A woman can trust her outward beauty and adornment, or she can trust God and cultivate a

gentle and quiet spirit. It all comes back to trust in God; so she should be like **the holy women who trusted in God.**

c. **As Sarah obeyed Abraham:** Two things demonstrated Sarah's submission to Abraham. First, she **obeyed** Abraham even when it was difficult and even when he was wrong (as in Gen 12:10-20). Second, she *honored* Abraham by **calling him lord**. It is possible to *obey* someone without showing them the *honor* that is part of submission. True submission knows the place of both *obedience* and *honor*.

i. "An attitude of submission to a husband's authority will be reflected in numerous words and actions each day which reflect deference to his leadership and an acknowledgment of his final responsibility." (Grudem)

d. **If you do good and are not afraid with any terror:** True submission, full of faith in God has no room for fear or terror. It does good and leaves the result to God and not to man.

i. The words "**do good**" remind us that true submission is not a sulking surrender to authority. It is an active embrace of God's will, demonstrating trust in Him.

4. (7) *The heart of a godly husband.*

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

a. **Dwell with them:** A godly husband lives with his wife. He doesn't merely share a house, but he truly *lives with* her. He recognizes the great point of Paul's teaching on marriage in Ephesians 5 : that "*husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves*

his wife loves himself" (Eph 5:28). The godly husband understands the *essential unity* or *oneness* God has established between husband and wife.

b. **With understanding:** A godly husband undertakes the important job of

understanding his wife. By knowing her well, he is able to demonstrate his love for her far more effectively.

i. When a husband has this **understanding**, God directs him to use it in that he is to **dwell with** his wife **with understanding**. He is supposed to take his **understanding** and apply it in daily life with his wife. This is where many men have trouble following through. They may *have understanding* about their wives, but they don't *use* it as they **dwell with them**.

c. **Giving honor:** A godly husband knows how to make his wife feel honored. Though she submits to him, he takes care that she does not feel like she is an employee or under a tyrant.

i. In **giving honor to the wife**, the word in the ancient Greek language for **the wife** is a rare word, meaning more literally "the feminine one." It suggests that the woman's feminine nature should prompt the husband to honor her.

ii. This was a *radical* teaching in the world Peter lived in. In that ancient culture a husband had absolute rights over his wife and the wife had virtually no rights in the marriage. In the Roman world, if a man caught his wife in an act of adultery he could kill her on the spot. But if a wife caught her husband, she could do nothing against him. All the duties and obligations in marriage were put on the wife. Peter's

radical teaching is that the *husband* has God-ordained duties and obligations toward his wife.

d. **As to the weaker vessel:** In this context **weaker** speaks of the woman's relative physical weakness in comparison to men. Men aren't necessarily stronger spiritually than women, but they are generally stronger physically. As Peter brought in the idea of the woman's feminine nature with the words **the wife**, he continues in appreciating the feminine nature and how a husband should respond to it.

i. Therefore, a godly husband recognizes whatever limitations his wife has physically and he does not expect more from her than is appropriate and kind.

e. **Heirs together:** A godly husband realizes that his spouse is not only his wife, but also his sister in Jesus. Part of their inheritance in the Lord is only realized in their oneness as husband and wife.

i. **Heirs together:** This "reminds husbands that even though they have been given great authority within marriage, their wives are still equal to them in spiritual privilege and eternal importance: they are 'joint heirs.'" (Grudem)

f. **That your prayers may not be hindered:** The failure to live as a godly husband has spiritual consequences. It can and it will hinder prayer.

i. Some have thought that Peter has in mind here the **prayers** that husbands and wives pray together. But since he addresses husbands only, and because he says **your prayers**, he refers to the prayers of husbands in general.

ii. Peter *assumed* that the fear of **hindered** prayer would motivate Christian husbands to love and care for their wives as they should. Many Christian men

have such a low regard for prayer that this warning may not adequately motivate them.

iii. "Indeed, to true believers prayer is so invaluable that the danger of hindering it is used by Peter as a motive why, in their marriage relationships, and household concerns, they should behave themselves with great wisdom. He bids the husband 'dwell' with his wife 'according to knowledge,' and render loving honor to her, lest their united prayers should be hindered. Anything which hinders prayer must be wrong. If any management of the family, or want of management, is injuring our power in prayer, there is an urgent demand for an alteration." (Spurgeon)

B. Godliness in suffering.

1. (8-9) *A plea for unity and love among God's people.*

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

a. **Be of one mind:** Most of us are willing to have **one mind**, as long as that **one mind** is *my mind*! But the **one mind** is to be *the mind of Christ* (1Co 2:16). Our common **mind** is to be Jesus' mind.

i. This command brings us back to the need to know God's word. We can't **be of one mind**, the mind of Jesus, if we don't know what His mind is. The word of God shows us the mind of Jesus.

b. **Be of one mind:** This speaks to the essential *unity* of God's people. We are one; but we are not all the same. While we should all **be of one mind**, we can't expect

everyone to be like us. God has built both unity and diversity among His people.

i. Every cell of your body is different, and each one has its role to play. But every cell in your body has the same DNA code written in it, the master plan for the whole body. Every cell in your body has the same “mind.”

ii. We could say that Christians should be like a good choir. Each one sings with his own voice and some sing different parts, but everyone sings to the same music and in harmony with one another.

c. Having compassion... tenderhearted... courteous:

Peter described the kind of warm love that should be among the people of God. We should be compassionate, brotherly, tenderhearted, and even polite.

i. Remember that this was the measure Jesus gave to the world to identify His true disciples: “*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*” (Joh 13:35). Jesus did not command us to *like* our brothers and sisters in Christ. But we are commanded to love them; and once we start loving them we will start liking them.

d. Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing: The greatest challenge to our love for others comes when we are wronged. At those times we are called to not return **evil for evil**, but to give a **blessing** instead.

i. No dispute, argument, or personality conflict among believers should linger. Even if one Christian gets out of line, the loving response of other Christians should keep the problem small and short-lived.

ii. The natural response to hostility is retaliation. This is what the terrible ethnic conflicts all over the world

are all about - one group wrongs another, and dedicates the rest of its existence to repaying that wrong. Only the love of Jesus for our enemies can break the terrible cycle.

iii. Jesus reminded us that it is no great credit if we love those who love us in return; the real test of love is to demonstrate compassion to our enemies (Mat 5:44-47).

e. **That you may inherit a blessing:** We love one another, but not only for the sake of Jesus, whose body we are members of. We love one another, but not only for the sake of our brother or sister for whom Jesus died. We also love one another for our *own sake* - by blessing those who have wronged us, we will **inherit a blessing**. If you can't love for the sake of Jesus, or for the sake of your brother, then do it for your *own sake*!

2. (10-12) *A quotation from Psa 34:12-16 demonstrates the blessing that comes to those who turn away from evil and do good.*

For

"He who would love life

And see good days,

Let him refrain his tongue from evil,

And his lips from speaking deceit.

Let him turn away from evil and do good;

Let him seek peace and pursue it.

For the eyes of the LORD *are* on the righteous,

And His ears *are open* to their prayers;

But the face of the LORD *is* against those who do evil."

a. **Let him turn away from evil and do good:** Doing good is often difficult because as a general rule, evil is rewarded immediately and the reward of doing good is

often delayed. But the rewards of good are better and far more secure than the rewards of doing evil. God promises this in the passage quoted by Peter.

3. (13-17) *How to handle it when our good is returned with evil.*

And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are* blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

a. **And who is he who will harm you:** Though Peter says that Christians should always answer evil with good, he also lived in the real world and he knew that people often repaid good with a response of evil.

i. "Not to be hated by the world; to be loved and flattered and caressed by the world - is one of the most terrible positions in which a Christian can find himself. 'What bad thing have I done,' asked the ancient sage, 'that he should speak well of me?'" (Meyer)

b. **If you become followers of what is good:** Literally, **become followers** is "be zealous." "Some Jews were zealots, boasting their zeal for the Lord or His Law... *all* Christians should be *zealots for that which is good.*" (Hart)

c. **But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed:** Peter reminds us that there is even a blessing for us when we **suffer for righteousness' sake**. God will care for us, especially when we **suffer** unjustly.

i. Jesus spoke of the same attitude: *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Mat 10:28).

d. **And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled:** The presence or possibility of suffering for doing good should not make us shrink back from doing good. Instead we should give a special place (**sanctify**) to God in our hearts, and always be ready to explain our faith (**give a defense**), always doing it with a right attitude (**meekness and fear**).

i. Other manuscripts render **sanctify the Lord God in your hearts** as, *sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts*. "The simple meaning of the injunction is that at the very centre of life there is to be one Lord, and that is Christ... Other lords are permitted to invade the sanctuary of the heart, and to exercise dominion over us. Our own selfish desires, the opinion of others, worldly wisdom, the pressure of circumstances, these and many other lords command us, and we turn away our simple and complete allegiance to our one Lord." (Morgan)

ii. We can **be ready to give a defense** if we have made ourselves ready in knowing the Bible. Peter knew how important it was to **give a defense to everyone who asks you**. He had to do this in the situations described in Act 2:14-39, Act 3:11-26, Act 4:8-12, and Act 5:29-32. In each point of

testing Peter relied on the power of the Holy Spirit and was able to **give a defense**.

e. **Those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed:** Our **good conduct**, when our good is returned with evil, will prove others wrong in their opinions about us and it will make them **ashamed** for speaking against our godly lives.

f. **For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil:** None of us want to suffer. But if we must, may it be for **doing good** and not for **doing evil**. Sometimes Christians are obnoxious and offensive and are made **to suffer** for it. They may wish it were persecution for the sake of the gospel, but really it is simply suffering **for doing evil**.

C. Jesus shows the power of suffering for doing good.

1. (18) *Through His godly suffering, Jesus brought us to God.*

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

a. **For Christ also suffered once for sins:** Jesus **suffered once for sins**. There is no longer any sacrifice or atonement that can please God other than what Jesus provided at the cross. Even our own suffering won't pay for our sins. The price has already been paid.

i. Though Peter used the suffering of Christ as an encouragement and strength to his afflicted readers, we must remember that Peter also set Jesus completely apart from all others in his suffering. Spurgeon recalled the heroic suffering of one godly man: "I remember reading, in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, the story of a man of God, who was bound to a stake to die for Christ; there he was, calm and quiet, till his

legs had been burned away, and the bystanders looked to see his helpless body drop from the chains as black as coal, and not a feature could be discerned; but one who was near was greatly surprised to see that poor black carcass open its mouth, and two words came out of it; and what do you suppose they were? 'Sweet Jesus!' And then the martyr fell over the chains, and at last life was gone."

ii. That saint had the sweet presence of Jesus to help him through his horrible suffering; but Jesus did not have the sweet presence of His Father to help Him on the cross. Instead, God the Father treated Him as if He were an enemy, as the target of the righteous wrath of God. In this sense, the suffering of Jesus on the cross was worse than any ever suffered by a martyr; perhaps not worse in the physical pain suffered, but certainly in the spiritual suffering and total experience.

iii. "It is almost as if the apostle said, 'You have none of you suffered when compared with him;' or, at least, he was the Arch-Sufferer, - the Prince of sufferers, - the Emperor of the realm of agony, - Lord Paramount in sorrow... You know a little about grief, but you do not know much. The hem of grief's garment is all you ever touch, but Christ wore it as his daily robe. We do but sip of the cup he drank to its bitterest dregs. We feel just a little of the warmth of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace; but he dwelt in the very midst of the fire."
(Spurgeon)

b. **The just for the unjust:** Jesus is a perfect example of suffering for doing good. He, the **just**, suffered for all of us who are **the unjust** - and the purpose of it all was to **bring us to God**, to restore our broken and dead relationship with Him.

i. Since Jesus did all this to **bring us to God**, how wrong it is for us to not come to God in fellowship! The ancient Greek word translated "**bring**" is the same word used for *access* in Rom 5:2 and Eph 2:18. In ancient literature, the word **bring** was used "of admission to an audience with the Great King." (Blum)

c. **Being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit:** Jesus did die in His body but was raised from the dead **by the Holy Spirit**. Here, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. It also tells us that the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 6:4), and it says that Jesus raised Himself from the dead (Joh 2:18-22). The resurrection was the work of the Triune God.

2. (19-20a) *Through godly suffering, Jesus preached to the spirits in prison.*

By whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient,

a. **By whom:** This means that Jesus was *inspired by the Holy Spirit* when He did the work of preaching to the spirits in prison. He was *made alive by the Spirit*, and then also did this work by the same Spirit.

b. **He went and preached to the spirits in prison:** Apparently this work was done in the period after Jesus' death but before His first resurrection appearance to the disciples. Jesus went to Hades - the abode of the dead - and **preached to the spirits** there.

c. **Spirits in prison:** Though some have regarded these **spirits** as human spirits, it is more likely that they were demonic spirits. We know that their disobedience was *in the days of Noah* (1Pe 3:20). We have evidence that this was a time of gross sin for both demons and

humans, when there was an ungodly mingling of humans and demons (Gen 6:1-2).

i. "Apparently, the oldest identification of those imprisoned spirits understood them as the fallen angels of Genesis 6. That view was widely known and generally taken for granted in the apostolic era." (Hiebert)

d. **Preached to the spirits in prison:** We also don't know exactly why Jesus **preached** to these imprisoned spirits. In all probability this was *preaching* (the proclamation of God's message), but it was not *evangelism* (the proclamation of good news). Jesus **preached** a message of *judgment* and final condemnation in light of His finished work on the cross to these disobedient spirits.

i. In doing this there was a completion in Jesus' triumph over evil, even the evil that happened before the flood. The Bible says that even those *under the earth* must acknowledge Jesus' ultimate Lordship. Here Jesus was announcing that fact: "*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth*" (Php 2:10).

ii. "We do not believe that Peter said that Christ preached the gospel to those imprisoned spirits; he taught that Christ announced His triumph over evil, which was bad news for them. For Peter's readers, however, it meant comfort and encouragement." (Hiebert)

iii. "What His message was we are not told. Why only those disobedient in the days of Noah are mentioned is not stated. What the purpose or result of Christ's preaching was, is not revealed. On all these points we may form our own conclusions, but we have no

authority for anything approaching dogmatic teaching.” (Morgan)

3. (20b-22) The salvation of Noah as a picture of baptism.

When once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

a. **Eight souls, were saved through water:** Peter drew a picture with his words here. Even as Noah’s salvation from the judgment of God was connected with **water**, so the Christian’s salvation is connected with **water**, the water of **baptism**.

i. The water of the flood washed away sin and wickedness and brought a new world with a fresh start before God. The water of baptism does the same thing, providing a passage from the old to the new.

ii. “Noah was not saved by the world’s being gradually reformed and restored to its primitive innocence, but a sentence of condemnation was pronounced, and death, burial, and resurrection ensued. Noah must go into the ark and become dead to the world; the floods must descend from heaven, and rise upward from their secret fountains beneath the earth, the ark must be submerged with many waters — here was burial; and then after a time, Noah and his family must come out into a totally new world of resurrection life.” (Spurgeon)

b. **Not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God:** At the same time Peter was careful to point out that it isn't the actual water washing of baptism that saves us, but the spiritual reality behind the immersion in water. What really saves us is the **answer of a good conscience toward God**, a conscience made **good** through the completed work of Jesus.

c. **Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God:** We see the completeness of Jesus' work by His exaltation to the **right hand of God** the Father, and the subjection of all created spirits unto Him (**angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him**). So though Jesus suffered for doing good, He had the ultimate triumph. The example of Jesus proves Peter's point in 1Pe 3:9 : when we suffer for doing good, we will inherit a blessing.

i. Jesus **has gone into heaven**, and it is better for us that He is there. Spurgeon related this to how the high priest, ministering for Israel on the Day of Atonement, disappeared from the people and went behind the veil. "Though he was not with them, he was with God, which was better for them. The high priest was more useful to them within the veil than outside of it; he was doing for them out of sight what he could not accomplish in their view. I delight to think that my Lord is with the Father. Sometimes I cannot get to God, my access seems blocked by my infirmity; but he is always with God to plead for me."

ii. Our connection with Jesus is like the little boy with his kite. His kite flew so high in the sky that he could no longer see it. Someone asked him, "How do you know it is still up there?" The boy answered, "I can

feel it pull." We can't see Jesus enthroned in heaven, but we can certainly feel Him pull us toward Himself.

iii. Since Jesus **has gone into heaven**, His Church is safe. "Let not his church tremble, let her not think of putting out the hand of unbelief to steady the ark of the Lord. The history of the church is to be the history of Christ repeated: she is to be betrayed, she is to be scourged, she is to be falsely accused and spitted on; she may have her crucifixion and her death; but she shall rise again. Her Master rose, and like him she shall rise and receive glory. You can never kill the church till you can kill Christ; and you can never defeat her till you defeat the Lord Jesus, who already wears the crown of triumph." (Spurgeon)

Stewards of God's Grace

1Pe 4:1 Therefore, Christ having suffered for us in the flesh, also you arm yourselves with the same thought, that he suffering in the flesh has been made to rest from sin,

1Pe 4:2 for him no longer to live in the lusts of men, but to live the remaining time in the flesh in the will of God.

1Pe 4:3 For the time of life having passed is sufficient for us to have worked out the will of the nations, having gone on in wantonness, lusts, drunkenness, parties, carousings, and unlawful idolatries;

1Pe 4:4 in which they are surprised, you not running with them into the same overflow of unsavedness, blaspheming;

1Pe 4:5 who will give account to Him having readiness to judge the living and dead.

1Pe 4:6 For to this end also the gospel was preached to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but might live according to God in the Spirit.

1Pe 4:7 But the end of all things has drawn near. Be of sound mind, then, and be sensible to prayers;

1Pe 4:8 and above all things having fervent love to yourselves, "because love will cover a multitude of sins."
Prov. 10:12

1Pe 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without murmurings,

1Pe 4:10 each one as he received a gift, ministering it to yourselves as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1Pe 4:11 If anyone speaks, let it be as the words of God; if anyone ministers, as by strength which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom is the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

Suffering as a Christian

1Pe 4:12 Beloved, do not be astonished at the fiery trial happening among you for your testing, as if a surprise were occurring to you;

1Pe 4:13 but according as you share the sufferings of Christ, rejoice; so that you may rejoice exultingly at the revelation of His glory.

1Pe 4:14 If you are reviled in the name of Christ, you are blessed, because "the Spirit of God and of glory rests on you." Truly, according to them, He is blasphemed; but according to you, He is glorified. Isa. 11:2

1Pe 4:15 For do not let any of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a meddler in the affairs of others.

1Pe 4:16 But if one suffers as a Christian, do not let him be ashamed, but to glorify God in this respect.

1Pe 4:17 Because the time has come to begin the judgment from the house of God; and if firstly from us, what will be the end of the ones disobeying the gospel of God?

1Pe 4:18 And "if the righteous is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and sinner appear?" Prov. 11:31

1Pe 4:19 So as indeed the ones suffering according to God's will, as to a faithful Creator, let them commit their souls in

well-doing.

1 Peter 4:1-19

1 Peter 4 - Serving God in the Last Days

A. Attitudes for end-times believers.

1. (1-2) In the last days, Christians should have an attitude of commitment.

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

a. **Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind:** The commitment God calls us to have is nothing greater than the commitment Jesus had in enduring suffering for our salvation. In the last days we need to have a commitment to God that will endure through great struggles.

i. Jesus communicated the same idea when He told us that anyone who would come after Him must take up his cross and follow (Mat 16:24). Taking up the cross meant that you were absolutely committed and not looking back.

ii. **Arm yourself with the same mind:** Many of us are defeated in our battle against sin because we refuse to sacrifice anything in the battle. We only want victory if it comes easily to us. Jesus called us to have the kind of attitude that would sacrifice in the battle against sin (Mat 5:29-30).

b. **He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin:** When a person suffers physical persecution for the

sake of Jesus, it almost always profoundly changes their outlook regarding sin and the pursuit of the lusts of the flesh. That one is more likely to **live the rest of his time in the flesh not for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.**

i. "Whoever has suffered for doing right, and has still gone on obeying God in spite of the suffering it involved, has made a clear break with sin." (Grudem)

ii. Hiebert observes that the phrase **has ceased from sin** "Depicts the spiritual state of the victorious sufferer. It carries a note of triumph; he has effectively broken with a life dominated by sin. It need not mean that he no longer commits any act of sin, but that his old life, dominated by the power of sin, has been terminated."

iii. If we have not physically suffered for following Jesus Christ, we can still connect ourselves by faith to Jesus, who has **suffered for us in the flesh**. "I beg you to remember that there is no getting quit of sin – there is no escaping from its power – except by contact and union with the Lord Jesus Christ." (Spurgeon)

c. **He no longer should live the rest of his time:** Peter gave us two time references that are helpful in having the right attitude in our following of Jesus Christ.

- First, **no longer** should we live in sin, and we should answer every temptation and sinful impulse with the reply, "**no longer.**"

- Second, we should carefully consider how to **live the rest of our time**. God has appointed us some further days on this earth; when each of us must answer to Him how we **live this time**.

2. (3-6) *In the last days, Christians should live with an attitude of wisdom.*

For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

a. **For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles:** Peter realized we have all spent enough time living like the world. Now we are called to live like Christians. It is a profound and foolish waste of time for Christians to live like the world, and we must simply stop being double-minded and start living as Christians.

i. Sadly, many Christians (in their heart of hearts) think that they have *not* **spent enough** time doing the will of the ungodly. They want to experience more of the world before they make a full commitment to godliness. This is a tragic mistake and takes a path that leads *away* from eternal life.

b. **Lewdness:** This word begins a list of sins that Peter understood should only mark the *past* life of Christians and not the present. This word means to live without any sense of moral restraint, especially in regard to sexual immorality and violence.

i. **Lewdness** “denotes excesses of all kinds of evil. Involving a lack of personal self-restraint, the term pictures sin as an inordinate indulgence of appetites

to the extent of violating a sense of public decency.” (Hiebert)

ii. When we look at this list (**lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries**), we see just how little fallen man has progressed in the last 2,000 years. These problems have not been solved in the time since Peter wrote this letter.

c. **They think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation:** When the world looks at our godly living, they **think it strange** that we do not follow them in their **flood of dissipation** (wastefulness). If life lived after the flesh is anything, it is a *waste*.

i. **Speaking evil of you:** When we don’t participate in the sin around us, we convict those who practice their sin, and they don’t like that - so they speak evil of us.

ii. “It does not matter how your good deeds are received by men. If you are like God, you will find them received with contempt and ingratitude.” (Meyer)

iii. “Since heathen religious ceremonies were part and parcel of ordinary life (e.g., all civic and national activities were bound up with them) the Christians were compelled to avoid what would have seemed to their fellows a wholly innocuous co-operation and to go much further than merely separate themselves from actual heathen worship.” (Best, cited in Hiebert)

d. **They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge:** When this account is required, all who live in the sins Peter described will clearly see how foolish they have been. Even if one seems to live the “good life” living by

the world's rules, his life will be a waste in the measure of eternity.

e. For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead: Peter also says that because of this eternal judgment the gospel was preached to the **dead**. The righteous **dead** know and live on in constant awareness of the reality of eternity - and are rewarded by this understanding as they **live according to God in the spirit**.

i. Peter has already told us that Jesus preached to the *spirits in prison*, preaching a message of judgment (1Pe 3:19). Apparently during this same time Jesus also preached a message of salvation to the faithful dead in Abraham's Bosom (Luk 16:22) who anticipated the work of the Messiah for them. This preaching **to those who are dead** was not the offer of a second chance, but the completion of the salvation of those who had been faithful to God under their first chance.

ii. In doing this, Jesus fulfilled the promise that He would lead *captivity captive* (Psa 68:18 and Eph 4:8) and He would "*proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound*" (Isa 61:1 and Luk 4:18).

iii. It may also be that Peter here had in mind those in the Christian community who had already died, perhaps even dying as martyrs. If this is the case then Peter used their heroic example as a way to encourage his suffering readers to also be faithful.

3. (7) In the last days, Christians should live with an attitude of serious prayer.

But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

a. **The end of all things is at hand:** If we really believe that we live in the last days, it is all the more appropriate that we give ourselves to prayer (**therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers**).

i. "The assertion that the end of the age does indeed stand near and may break in at any time well represents the view of the early church." (Hiebert)

ii. Many Christians who believe that Jesus is coming soon based on prophecy charts and political events fail to apply that belief in the proper way. They fail to apply themselves to more diligent prayer.

b. **Therefore be serious... in your prayers:** We must give ourselves to **serious** prayer. As we see the weight of eternity rushing towards us, we dare not take the need for prayer lightly.

c. **Therefore be... watchful in your prayers:** We must give ourselves to **watchful** prayer, primarily having our hearts and minds watching and ready for the return of Jesus Christ. But this also means watching ourselves and watching this world, measuring our readiness for Jesus' coming.

4. (8-11) *In the last days, Christians should live with an attitude of love.*

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

a. **Above all things have fervent love for one another:** If these are the last days, then it is important for us to love those we are going to spend eternity with. In light of eternity, we must have **fervent love for one another**.

b. **For “love will cover a multitude of sins”:** Love does **cover a multitude of sins**, both the sins of the one loving and the sins of the one who is being loved.

i. “Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians, many small offences, and even some large ones, are readily overlooked and forgotten. But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and conflicts about - to Satan’s perverse delight.” (Grudem)

c. **Be hospitable to one another without grumbling:** Love will show itself in hospitality. Christians should often open their homes to others and doing it all **without grumbling**.

i. “‘Without grumbling’ is a frank recognition that the practice of hospitality could become costly, burdensome, and irritating. The Greek term denotes a muttering or low speaking as a sign of displeasure. It depicts a spirit that is the opposite of cheerfulness.” (Hiebert)

d. **As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another:** Love will show itself as we give to the church family what God has given us as gifts. As we do so, we are **good stewards** of the many-faceted **(manifold) grace of God** given to us.

i. In 1Co 15:10 Paul makes it clear that he was what he was only by God’s grace. But at the same time, “*His grace toward me was not in vain*” because Paul put his own God-inspired efforts to work with God’s

grace. The idea is that if we are *bad* **stewards of the manifold grace of God**, it is as if that grace was given to us in vain. That grace is wasted, because it only comes *to* us and doesn't move *through* us.

ii. "*Manifold grace* is many-coloured grace. As when a ray of light breaks into a spray of many hues, so each of us receives God's grace at a different angle, and flashes it back broken up into some fresh colour." (Meyer)

e. **If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies:** Every part is important; each has its job to do. Even the smallest, seemingly least important part of the body of Christ is important.

i. A man was rebuilding the engine to his lawn mower, and when he finished, he had one small part left over, and he couldn't remember where it went. He started the engine and it ran great, so he figured that the part was useless - until he tried to stop the lawn mower, and it wouldn't stop! Even the smallest, seemingly least important part of the body of Christ is important.

ii. As we serve **one another**, we do it with the strength God provides, **the ability which God supplies** - so that to Him **belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever**.

B. Understanding your time of trial.

1. (12-13) *Enduring trials with the right attitude.*

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

a. **Concerning the fiery trial which is to try you:** Instead of thinking of trials (even **fiery** trials) as **strange** occurrences, we see them as ways to **partake of Christ's sufferings**. And if we partake of His sufferings, we will also partake of His **glory** and **joy**.

i. Peter once told Jesus to avoid the suffering of the cross (Mar 8:32-33). "Once it seemed strange to the Apostle Peter that his Master should think of suffering. Now he thinks it strange that He could have imagined anything else." (Meyer)

b. **Partake of Christ's sufferings:** We can only **partake** of Jesus' sufferings because He partook of our humanity and sufferings. He became a man and suffered so that our suffering wouldn't be meaningless. It is good to share *anything* with Jesus, even His suffering.

c. **Rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy:** Our tendency is to embrace the glory and the joy and to avoid any sharing of Jesus' suffering. Or we morbidly fixate on the suffering and forget that it is but a necessary prelude to the **glory** and **joy**.

i. We should never deny the place of suffering in building godliness in the Christian life. Though there is much needless pain we bear through lack of knowledge or faith, there is also necessary suffering. If suffering was a suitable tool to teach Jesus (Heb 5:8), it is a suitable tool to teach His servants.

ii. **To the extent** implies a measure. Those who have suffered more in Jesus will rejoice more at His coming in **glory**.

2. (14-16) *The difference between suffering as a Christian and suffering as an evildoer.*

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

a. **If you are reproached for the name of Christ:** Suffering for **the name of Christ** is a blessing, because it shows that we really are following Jesus, and that we suffer because we are identified with Him.

b. **On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified:** We expect the world to blaspheme Jesus. But He should always be **glorified** among Christians.

c. **Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody:** Suffering as **an evildoer** is deserved and brings shame to the name of Jesus. Peter recognized that not all suffering that Christians experience is suffering in **the name of Jesus**.

i. We understand when Peter writes about the suffering that might come to the **murderer**, the **thief**, or the **evildoer**. Yet we shouldn't be surprised that he also includes the **busybody in other people's matters**. Such people *do* suffer a lot of grief and pain, but not for the sake of Jesus.

d. **If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed:** Suffering as a Christian is nothing to be ashamed about, even though the world may despise the suffering Christian. Instead, we should **glorify God in** these matters.

i. We don't glorify God for suffering. But we do glorify Him **in** suffering, and we glorify Him for what He will accomplish in us and through us with the suffering.

ii. "The name 'Christian' (*Christianos*), built on the name *Christ* with the suffix *-ianos*, a Latin formation (*-ianus*), denotes a partisan follower... *Christian* categorized the followers of Christ as 'members of the Christ-party,' not 'little Christ' as some popular explanations would have it." (Hiebert)

iii. Christians were first known as "disciples," "believers," "the Lord's disciples," or "those who belonged to the Way" before they were known as Christians, first at Act 11:26. This is the first of three places in the New Testament where the followers of Jesus are named Christians.

- In Act 11:26 it tells us *the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch*.

- In Act 26:28 Agrippa told Paul, *You almost persuade me to become a Christian*. This shows that between Act 11:26; Act 26:28 **Christian** had become a popularized name for the followers of Jesus.

- In 1Pe 4:16 the idea is that some are suffering because they are identified as Christians. This shows that the name had become very widely used, so much so that one could be persecuted for being numbered as a **Christian**.

3. (17-19) *Committing your soul to God in the midst of suffering.*

For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now

**“If the righteous one is scarcely saved,
Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”**

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

a. **For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God:** In the context of suffering, Peter tells us that judgment begins at the **house of God**. Right now, God uses suffering as a **judgment** (in a positive, purifying sense) for Christians (**the house of God**).

i. It is *right* for judgment to begin at the house of God. “There is equity in it; for Christians profess to be better than others, and so they ought to be. They say they are regenerate, so they ought to be regenerate. They say that they are a holy people, separated unto Christ; so they ought to be holy, and separate from sinners, as he was.” (Spurgeon)

ii. Now is our time of *fiery trial* (1Pe 4:12); the ungodly will have their fire later. The fire we endure now purifies us; the fire the ungodly will endure will punish them. Yet we always remember that there is never any punishment from God for us in our sufferings, only purification. For the Christian, the issue of *punishment* was settled once and for all at the cross, where Jesus endured all the punishment the Christian could ever face from God.

iii. The same fire that consumes straw will purify gold. The fire is the same, but its *purpose* in application is different, and its *effect* is different upon the straw and the gold. Even so, Christians do suffer some of the same things the ungodly do, yet the *purpose* of God is different and the *effect* is different.

b. If it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Peter's sobering application is clear. If this is what God's *children* experience, what will become of those who have made themselves His enemies? How can they ever hope to stand before the judgment and wrath of God?

i. Christians can rejoice that the sufferings they face in this life are the worst they will ever face throughout all eternity. We have seen the worst; those who reject Jesus Christ have seen the *best* of life their eternal existence will ever see.

c. If the righteous one is scarcely saved: Since this is true – that the salvation of the righteous does not come without difficulty – then it should make us pause if we ourselves or others seem to have an easy salvation.

i. It isn't that our salvation is difficult in the sense of earning it or finding a way to deserve it; it is all the free gift of Jesus Christ. Yet our salvation *is* hard in the sense that the claims of discipleship challenge us and demand that we cast away our idols and our sins. Real discipleship and genuine following after Jesus Christ is sometimes a hard thing, so we understand why Peter quoted the passage from Pro 11:31, "**the righteous one is scarcely saved.**"

d. Those who suffer according to the will of God: Peter again made a distinction between those **who suffer according to the will of God** and those who suffer otherwise. Not all suffering is the will of God.

e. Commit their souls to Him: The ancient Greek word translated "

commit" is a technical one, used for leaving money on deposit with a trusted friend. Such a trust was regarded as one of the most sacred things in life, and the friend

was bound by honor to return the money intact. It is the very word Jesus used when He said, "*Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit*" (Luk 23:46).

i. So when Christians **commit their souls to Him**, they leave their souls in a safe place. God is **a faithful Creator**, and we can give ourselves to Him as pliable clay in His hands.

f. **Faithful Creator**: Much of the agony we put ourselves through in times of trial and suffering has to do with our disregard of God's faithfulness or of His place as Creator. He *is* our sovereign **Creator**, with the right to do with us as He pleases. Yet He *is* **faithful**, and will only do what is ultimately best for us.

Shepherd the Flock of God

1Pe 5:1 I, a fellow elder, exhort the elders among you, I being also witness of the sufferings of Christ, and being sharer of the glory about to be revealed:

1Pe 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight, not by compulsion, but willingly; nor eagerly for base gain, but readily;

1Pe 5:3 nor as exercising lordship over the ones allotted to you , but becoming examples of the flock.

1Pe 5:4 And at the appearing of the Chief Shepherd, you will receive the never fading crown of glory.

1Pe 5:5 Likewise, younger ones be subject to older ones; and all being subject to one another. Put on humility, because God sets Himself "against proud ones, but He gives grace to humble ones." Prov. 3:34

1Pe 5:6 Then be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in time;

1Pe 5:7 "casting all your anxiety onto Him," because it matters to Him concerning you. LXX-Psa. 54:23; MT-Psa. 55:22

1Pe 5:8 Be sensible, watch, because your adversary the Devil walks about as a roaring lion seeking someone he may devour;

1Pe 5:9 whom firmly resist in the faith, knowing the same sufferings are being completed in your brotherhood in the world.

1Pe 5:10 Now the God of all grace, the One calling you to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, you having suffered a little, He Himself will perfect, confirm, strengthen, establish you .

1Pe 5:11 To Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

1Pe 5:12 I wrote to you by a few words by way of Silvanus the faithful brother, as I reckon, exhorting and witnessing this to be the true grace of God, in which you stand.

1Pe 5:13 The fellow-elected in Babylon greet you; also Mark my son.

1Pe 5:14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you, all those in Christ Jesus. Amen.

1 Peter 5:1-14

1 Peter 5 - For Shepherds and Sheep

A. Elders should be faithful shepherds.

1. (1) A call to elders.

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

a. **The elders who are among you I exhort:** Peter will give a word of exhortation to **the elders who are among** the Christians reading this letter. These elders had special responsibilities that Peter addressed.

i. The idea of the **elder** came into church life from Jewish culture (Exo 3:16; Exo 12:21; Exo 19:7). The word "**elder**" simply speaks of the maturity and wisdom that an older person should have, making them qualified for leadership. In its application, it is more about wisdom and maturity than a specific age.

ii. It was the practice of Paul and Barnabas to appoint elders in the churches they had founded (Act 14:23). There was also the development of the office of pastor, who was essentially a teaching elder (1Ti 5:17) who appointed and guided elders and other leaders (1Ti 3:1-13, 2Ti 2:2, Tit 1:5-9).

b. **I who am a fellow elder**: Peter was qualified to speak because he is **a fellow elder**. Though Peter was clearly the prominent disciple among the twelve, he claimed no special privilege or position, such as being the pope of the early church. Instead, Peter saw himself only as one **fellow elder** among all the elders in the church.

i. "It will always be our wisdom, dear friends, to put ourselves as much as we can into the position of those whom we address. It is a pity for anyone ever to seem to preach down to people; it is always better to be as nearly as possible on the same level as they are." (Spurgeon)

c. **A witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed**: Peter was qualified to speak because he was a **witness** of Jesus' sufferings when he saw Jesus' torture and perhaps the crucifixion. He was also a **partaker** of Jesus' glory, probably referring to when he saw the transfiguration of Jesus.

i. "He was with Christ in the *garden*, he was with him when he was *apprehended*, and he was with him in

the *high priest's hall*. Whether he followed him to the *cross* we know not." (Clarke)

ii. "The gospels do not state that Peter was personally present at the crucifixion; only John is specifically said to have been there. Peter (and other apostles) may well have been among 'all his acquaintances' who observed the event from afar (Luk 23:49)."

iii. Considering that Peter may have – or likely did – witness the sufferings of Jesus on the cross, the remembrance of that would make his exhortation to fellow elders all the more powerful. It would be as if he said, "You are leaders of the people for whom Jesus Christ suffered and died, and I saw Him suffer."

iv. Yet we also consider that many saw Jesus suffer, and it did not affect them the way it affected Peter and others who saw with faith. "There were thousands who were eyewitnesses of our Lord's sufferings who, nevertheless, saw not the true meaning of them. They saw the Great Sufferer besmeared with his own blood; but into his wounds they never looked by faith. Thousands saw the Savior die, but they simply went their way back to Jerusalem, some of them beating on their breasts, but none of them believing in him, or really knowing the secret of that wondrous death." (Spurgeon)

2. (2-3) What leaders in the church must do.

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

a. **Shepherd the flock of God:** This was the first aspect of leadership. Peter seemed to remember Jesus' three-

part commission to him in Joh 21:15-17. In that passage Jesus told Peter to show his love for Jesus by feeding and tending Jesus' sheep.

i. A spiritual **shepherd** does his job in two main ways. The first job is to *feed* the sheep. Jesus emphasized this to Peter in Joh 21:15-17. Another aspect of the job is to *tend* the sheep, which means protecting, guiding, nurturing, and caring for the sheep.

ii. The most important "tool" to **shepherd the flock of God** is a heart like the heart of Jesus, one that is willing to give one's life for the sheep, and who genuinely cares about and is interested in them (Joh 10:11-14).

b. **Serving as overseers**: For Peter the job of being a shepherd could also be understood as being an **overseer**. This word for leadership comes to the church from Greek culture, and it meant someone who watches over, a manager, or a supervisor (Act 20:28, 1Ti 3:1-2, Tit 1:7).

c. **Not by compulsion but willingly**: Shepherds should not do their job by **compulsion**, as if they were being forced into a task that they really hated. Instead they should serve God and His people **willingly**, from a heart that loves God's people as a shepherd loves sheep and wants to serve them.

i. "None of God's soldiers are mercenaries or pressed men: they are all volunteers. We must have a shepherd's heart if we would do a shepherd's work." (Meyer)

d. **Not for dishonest gain but eagerly**: Spiritual shepherds should not do their job for **dishonest gain**. The gain is **dishonest** because it was their motive for serving as shepherds. Instead, they should serve

eagerly, willing to serve apart from financial compensation.

i. "Could the office of a *bishop*, in those early days, and in the time of persecution, be a *lucrative* office? Does not the Spirit of God lead the apostle to speak these things rather for *posterity* than for that time?" (Clarke)

e. **Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock:** Shepherds should not do their job as **lords**, because the sheep do not belong to them. The sheep are **entrusted** to them. Therefore shepherds are to serve by being **examples**, not dictators.

i. **Nor as being lords** shows that in the mind of Peter, shepherds had significant authority in the early church. If the office of shepherd was so powerless that a shepherd didn't rule and lead, then there was little potential for **being lords**. Yet because Peter gives this warning, it shows there was the potential for lording over.

ii. The sobering fact is that pastors *are* **examples to the flock**, whether they intend to be or not. It is interesting to see how a congregation takes on the personality of its pastor in both good ways and bad ways.

iii. **Those entrusted to you:** "That noun means 'a lot,' and then 'that which is assigned by lot,' a portion or a share of something... God has assigned the various portions of His precious possession to their personal care." (Hiebert) The idea is that God has entrusted the responsibility of the spiritual care of certain individuals to particular shepherds.

3. (4) *The reward for leaders in the church.*

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

a. **When the Chief Shepherd appears:** Peter reminded shepherds in the church that they would answer one day to their **Chief Shepherd**, who will want to know what they did with *His* flock.

i. It is important for shepherds - pastors - to realize that they lead *Jesus'* sheep. *He* is the Shepherd, *He* is the Overseer (1Pe 2:25). In this sense, the Christian shepherd doesn't work for the sheep, he works for the **Chief Shepherd**.

b. **You will receive a crown of glory:** Faithful shepherds are promised a **crown of glory**, but not like the crown of leaves given to ancient Olympic champions. This crown will **not fade away**.

i. Crowns are not only for shepherds, but also for everyone who was faithful to Jesus and who did what He called them to do (1Co 9:25, 2Ti 4:8, Jas 1:12).

B. Everyone should be humble and watchful.

1. (5-7) A promise for the humble.

Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

**"God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble."**

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

a. **Likewise you younger people:** Peter began this word of humility to **you younger people**, in contrast to the elders he had just addressed. But he soon realized that it is of application to **all of you**. This word to **be**

submissive to one another and be clothed with humility applies to everyone, but perhaps *especially* to the young.

b. **Clothed with humility: Humility** is demonstrated by submission. It is the ability to cheerfully put away our own agenda for God's, even if God's agenda is expressed through another person.

i. **Yes, all of you** means that this is for all, both elders and "youngers." "Strive all to serve each other; let the pastors strive to serve the people, and the people the pastors; and let there be no contention, but who shall do most to oblige and profit all the rest." (Clarke)

c. **Be clothed with humility:** The phrase "**be clothed**" translates a rare word that referred to a slave putting on an apron before serving, even as Jesus did before washing the disciple's feet (Joh 13:4).

i. Some marks of humility:

- The willingness to perform the lowest and littlest services for Jesus' sake.
- Consciousness of our own inability to do anything apart from God.
- The willingness to be ignored of men.
- Not so much self-hating or depreciation as self-forgetfulness, and being truly others-centered instead of self-centered.

d. **For "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble":** Peter quoted Pro 3:34 to show that humility is essential to our relationship with God. If we want to live in God's **grace** (His unmerited favor) then we must lay aside our pride and be **humble** - not only to Him but also to one another.

i. **Resists:** "The verb vividly pictures God as one who places Himself in battle array against such individuals." (Hiebert)

ii. Grace and pride are eternal enemies. Pride demands that God bless me in light of what I think I deserve. Grace deals with me on the basis what is in God, not on the basis of anything in me.

iii. "Pride is one of the most detestable of sins; yet does it find lodgment in earnest souls, though we often speak of it by some lighter name. We call it - independence, self-reliance. We do not always discern it in the hurt feeling, which retires into itself, and nurses its sorrows in a sulk... We are proud of our humility, vain of our meekness; and, putting on the saintliest look, we wonder whether all around are not admiring us for our lowliness." (Meyer)

iv. "If you are willing to be nothing God will make something of you. The way to the top of the ladder is to begin at the lowest round. In fact in the church of God, the way up is to go down; but he that is ambitious to be at the top will find himself before long at the bottom." (Spurgeon)

e. **That He may exalt you in due time:** If God has us in a humble place at the present time, we must submit to God's plan. He knows the **due time** to exalt us, though we often think we know that time better than God does.

f. **Casting all your care upon Him:** True humility is shown by our ability to cast our **care upon** God. It is proud presumption to take things into our own worry and care about things that God has promised to take care of (Mat 6:31-34).

i. If we would heed the command of 1Pe 5:6 and truly humble ourselves under the mighty hand of

God, we would have far fewer cares to cast upon Him as invited in 1Pe 5:7. Worries about covetousness, ambition, popularity, all evaporate under the command to *humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God*.

ii. Spurgeon used the illustration of a man who came to move your furniture, but he carried a huge and heavy backpack of his own. He complains that he finds it difficult to do the job of moving your furniture; would you not suggest that he would find it easier if he laid his own burden aside so that he could carry yours? In the same way, we cannot do God's work when we are weighed down by our own burdens and worries. Cast them upon Him, and then take up the Lord's burden – which is light burden, and a yoke that fits us perfectly.

iii. There are many anxieties that we cannot cast upon God, and Peter's word here purifies us of these ungodly anxieties.

- "I am worried that I will never be rich."
- "I am burdened that others enjoy sinful pleasures and I do not."
- "I am worried that I am not famous or even popular."
- "I am burdened that I cannot get revenge on those who wronged me."

iv. "All cares of covetousness, anger, pride, ambition, and wilfulness must be cast to the winds; it would be criminal to dream of casting them upon God. Do not pray about them, except that God will redeem you from them. Let your desires be kept within a narrow circle, and your anxieties will be lessened at a stroke." (Spurgeon)

v. **Casting** is a rather energetic word. He didn't say, "Lay all your care upon Him," because we have to do it more energetically than that. The idea is, "*throw it away from you.*" The pressures and the burdens of your life are so heavy and difficult that it takes great concentration of effort to put them on Jesus.

vi. This work of **casting** can be so difficult that we need to use two hands to do it: the hand of *prayer* and the hand of *faith*. "Prayer tells God what the care is, and asks God to help, while faith believes that God can and will do it. Prayer spreads the letter of trouble and grief before the Lord, and opens all its budget, and then faith cries, 'I believe that God cares, and cares for me; I believe that he will bring me out of my distress, and make it promote his own glory.'" (Spurgeon)

g. **For He cares for you:** At their best moments the religions of ancient Greek culture could imagine a God who was good. Yet they never came to the place where they believed in a God who *cared*. The God of the Bible - the God who is really there - is a God who **cares for you**.

i. "It is the belief that God cares that marks off Christianity from all other religions, which under all varieties of form are occupied with the task of making God care, of awakening by sacrifice or prayer or act the slumbering interest of the Deity." (Masterman, cited in Hiebert)

ii. We often judge the parents by the children. When a child of God is full of worry and fear, doesn't the world have reason to believe that their Father in heaven doesn't care for them? Our worry and fear reflects poorly - and unfairly - upon God.

2. (8-9) *Be watchful for the devil.*

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

a. **Your adversary the devil walks about:** Peter exhorts us to remain clear-headed (**sober**) and watchful (**vigilant**), because Satan has not yet been bound and restrained for 1,000 years as Rev 20:1-2 says he will be. At the present time, **the devil walks about**.

i. "He *walketh about*-he has access to you everywhere; he knows your feelings and your propensities, and informs himself of all your circumstances; only God can know more and do more than he, therefore your care must be cast upon God." (Clarke)

ii. The devil certainly **walks about**; he is a finite being and can only be in one place at one time, yet his effort, energy, and associates enable him to extend his influence all over the world and in every arena of life.

b. **Like a roaring lion:** For Christians, Satan is a **lion** who may roar but who has been de-fanged at the cross (Col 2:15). Yet the sound of his roar - his deceptive lies - are still potent and he has the power to **devour** souls and rob Christians of effectiveness.

i. Psa 91:3 suggests that Satan may come against us like a *fowler*, one who captures birds. The fowler is always quiet and secretive, never wanting to reveal his presence. 2Co 11:14 tells us that Satan can come as *an angel of light*, appearing glorious, good, and attractive. Yet other times, Peter tells us, Satan comes against us **like a roaring lion**, loud and full of intimidation.

- He roars through persecution.
- He roars through strong temptation.
- He roars through blasphemies and accusations against God.

ii. We note Satan's goal: **seeking whom he may devour**. He isn't just looking to lick or nibble on his prey; he wants to **devour**. "He can never be content till he sees the believer utterly devoured. He would rend him in pieces, and break his bones and utterly destroy him if he could. Do not, therefore, indulge the thought, that the main purpose of Satan is to make you miserable. He is pleased with that, but that is not his ultimate end. Sometimes he may even make you happy, for he hath dainty poisons sweet to the taste which he administers to God's people. If he feels that our destruction can be more readily achieved by sweets than by bitters, he certainly would prefer that which would best effect his end." (Spurgeon)

c. **Resist him, steadfast in the faith:** The secret of spiritual warfare is simple, **steadfast resistance**. As we are **steadfast in the faith**, we **resist** the devil lies and threats and intimidation.

i. "Scripture urges believers to flee from various evils (1Co 6:18; 1Co 10:14; 1Ti 6:11; 2Ti 2:22), but nowhere are they advised to flee from the devil. That would be a futile effort." (Hiebert)

ii. **Resist** comes from two ancient Greek words: *stand* and *against*. Peter tells us to *stand against* the devil. Satan can be set running by the resistance of the lowliest believer who comes in the authority of what Jesus did on the cross.

iii. "Resist. Be more prayerful every time he is more active. He will soon give it up, if he finds that his

attacks drive you to Christ. Often has Satan been nothing but a big black dog to drive Christ's sheep nearer to the Master." (Spurgeon)

d. **Knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world:** We also take comfort in knowing that we are never alone in our spiritual warfare. Our brothers and sisters in Jesus have fought, and are fighting, the same battles.

i. "The outlook is on the whole conflict of the saints. It is seen as one. No soul is fighting alone. Each one is at once supporting, and supported by, all the rest." (Morgan)

3. (10-11) *A prayer for their spiritual strengthening.*

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

a. **May the God of all grace... perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you:** Knowing the suffering and danger Christians face, Peter can only conclude with *prayer*. He asks God to do His work of perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and settling.

i. These things are God's work in us and through us. Peter personally knew the futility of trying to face suffering and danger in one's own strength. His own failure taught him the need for constant reliance on God's work in our lives, so he prays for his dear Christian friends.

ii. **After you have suffered a while:** We almost want to ask Peter, "Why did you say that?" But the truth remains. We are only **called... to His eternal glory... after you have suffered a while**. We wish

we were called to His eternal glory on the “no suffering” plan. But God uses suffering to **perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle** us.

iii. We are **called us to His eternal glory**; but what does this glory entail?

- It is the glory of purified character.
- It is the glory of perfected humanity.
- It is the glory of complete victory.
- It is the glory of being honored by a King.
- It is the glory of reflecting the glory of God.
- It is the glory of the immediate, constant presence of God.
- It is the glory of the enjoyment of God Himself.

b. **To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever**: The God who can do this great work in our lives is certainly worthy of our praise.

4. (12-14) Conclusion to the letter.

By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

a. **By Silvanus... I have written to you**: This portion was probably written by Peter’s own hand, after he (according to the custom of the day) had dictated the bulk of the letter to **Silvanus**. This man **Silvanus** was probably the same one known as *Silas* in many of Paul’s letters.

b. This is the true grace of God in which you stand:

Peter summed up his message as an exhortation to understand and recognize **the true grace of God in which you stand**. We must understand not only what God's grace is, but that grace is our place of present standing before Him.

c. She who is in Babylon... greets you: **She** probably refers to the church, which in the ancient Greek is in the feminine. Peter apparently wrote from **Babylon**. This may be the literal city of Babylon (which still existed in Peter's day), or it may be a symbolic way of referring to either Rome or Jerusalem. These were two cities that in Peter's day were famous for their wickedness and spiritual rebellion, just like ancient **Babylon** was. In any regard, this was one church greeting another.

i. There was of course the literal city of Babylon on the Euphrates. There was also a place known as Babylon in Egypt, and it was a Roman military fortress near the present city of Cairo. Yet many think that Peter meant "Babylon" in a symbolic sense to represent the city of Rome. As a Biblical concept, "Babylon" as the city of this world stands in contrast to "Jerusalem" as the city of God. He may have meant Rome as Babylon as "the center of worldliness."

d. So does Mark my son: This verse connects **Mark** with Peter, apparently the same Mark of Act 12:12; Act 12:25; Act 15:37-39. When the style and perspective of the Gospel of Mark are taken into account, many believe that Peter was Mark's primary source of information for his gospel.

e. Greet one another with a kiss of love: Peter concludes with a command to greet and display God's love to one another, and by pronouncing a blessing of

peace. These two things - **love** for each other and **peace** - are especially necessary for those who suffer and live in dangerous times.

i. "It should be noted that the apostles did not originate that form of greeting; the custom already prevailed. They sanctioned its use as a sincere expression of Christian love." (Hiebert)